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An Analysis of the Behaviors of Elementary Principals Toward Informal Communication Systems

Phyllis O. Tate
Loyola University Chicago

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An Analysis of the Behaviors of Elementary
Principals Toward Informal
Communication Systems

by
Phyllis O. Tate

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

January

1982



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VITA

Phyllis O. Tate, the daughter of Philip and Cleo (Watson) Tate, was born in Chicago, Illinois on June 4, 1948.

Her secondary, as well as her elementary, education was obtained in the parochial schools of Chicago, Illinois. She graduated from Mercy High School in June, 1966.

In September, 1966, she entered the University of Illinois--Chicago Circle, and in August, 1969, received the degree of Bachelor of Science with a major in mathematics. She then entered Chicago State University in September, 1969 and was awarded a Master of Science degree in mathematics in August, 1970. In May, 1976, she again entered Chicago State University and received a Master of Education degree in December, 1977.

In September, 1970, she was hired by the Chicago Board of Education, where she is currently employed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Social organization without communication is impossible."¹ Communication is essential to the management of organizations.² Barnard suggested that, "the first executive function is to develop and maintain a system of communication."³ When people gather in organizations, Simon argued that the principal activity of the organization is communication. He maintained that

Communication may be formally defined as any process whereby decisional premises are transmitted from one member of an organization to another. It is obvious that without communication there can be no possibility then of the group influencing the behavior of the individual. ⁴

Because the organization fosters communication, there is the natural tendency for social interaction wherever and whenever individuals gather. Social

¹Dale A. Level, Jr. and Lynn Johnson, "Accuracy of Information Flows Within the Superior/Subordinate Relationship," The Journal of Business Communication 15 (February 1976), p. 13.

²Ibid.

³Chester I. Barnard, The Functions of the Executive (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938), p. 226.

⁴Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behavior (New York: The Free Press, 1957), p. 154.

interaction develops spontaneously as people associate with one another. Arising from this social interaction is the informal system of the organization. As Barnard stated,

Yet one will hear repeatedly that "you can't understand an organization or how it works from its organization chart, its charter, rules and regulations, nor from looking at or even watching its personnel." "Learning the organization ropes" in most organizations is chiefly learning who's who, what's what, why's why, of its informal society. 5

The informal communication system, sometimes known as the grapevine, is the communication aspect of the informal system of the organization. It is as fickle, dynamic, and varied as people are. It is the expression of the natural motivation of people to communicate. It is roughly half of the communication system in an organization.⁶ In fact, if employees are so uninterested in their work that they do not engage in shop talk about it, then this apathy is an indication of some maladjustment in the organization.⁷

In discussing the importance of informal communication systems to the decision making process of the organization, Owens maintained that decision making involves a process of combining communication from various sources

⁵Barnard, p. 121.

⁶Keith Davis, "Making Constructive Use of the Office Grapevine, in Readings in Human Relations ed. Keith Davis and William G. Scott (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1964), p. 191.

⁷Keith Davis, Human Behavior at Work (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1972), p. 212.

and it results in the transmission of further communication. The amount of information available to a decision making group affects the quality of decisions that the group makes. Owens continued that, in practical terms, the administrator is concerned with facilitating the free flow of information up, down, and laterally within the organization. An understanding of the communication networks of a school, what their patterns are, and how they work can be useful in improving the decision making performance of the school. Owens concluded that

It would appear that in a school, the free flow of useful decision making information depends more on interpersonal relationships between people in informal communication nets than the formal structure of the organization would indicate. 8

According to Newstrom, Monczka and Reif, the informal communication system

satisfies an important need of those employees desiring greater communication, and it simultaneously causes some problems for managers who see their influence diminished as they lose control of information flows. Informal communication is neither totally functional nor dysfunctional. 9

The relationship between the two systems of communication of the organization -- the formal and the informal -- is intimate because the members of the

⁸ Robert G. Owens, Organizational Behavior in Schools (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 97-99.

⁹ John Newstrom, Robert E. Monczka, and William E. Reif, "Perceptions of Grapevine: Its Value and Influence," The Journal of Business Communication 11(Spring 1974), p.12

organization, most of whom engage in both systems of communication, bring their own personalities with them. Formal and informal relationships are interdependent. If the needs of one system are overlooked in order to satisfy the needs of the other system, the qualities of synergy within the organization are denied. The relationship between the formal and informal systems of communication is dynamic and represents a degree of spontaneity in interactions between the two systems.¹⁰

Based on the spontaneous qualities of the informal organization, the need for representatives of the formal organization to assess accurately the changing position of informal groups becomes paramount in seeking optimum organizational effectiveness. ¹¹

Based upon the intimate, interdependent, and dynamic relationship of the formal and informal systems of communication, effective organizational management requires an understanding of the potential interactions between the two forms of communication. These understandings should provide the administrator with the necessary means to design appropriate interventions to increase the effectiveness of accomplishing the goals of the organization.

¹⁰ Richard O. Carlson, "Informal Organization and Social Distance: A Paradox of Purposive Organizations," Educational Administration and Supervision 44(No.6 1958, pp. 366-367.

¹¹ John J. Koehn, "A Study of the Interaction Patterns of the Formal and Informal School Organizations," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1972), p. 4.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between certain leadership behavior characteristics displayed by principals of public elementary schools and the manner in which the informal communication systems of these principals function. This study seeks to answer the basic question: Is there a tendency for individuals exhibiting certain leadership behavior to have informal communication systems which function in a predictable manner? In seeking to answer this question, a theory of leadership behavior was selected to serve as a framework upon which to make any comparisons and/or contrasts provided by the data collected for this study. In order to investigate informal communication systems, four aspects of communication were selected. Thus, the basic question can be divided into the following:

1. What is the relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and the level of activity on their informal communication systems?
2. What is the relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and their uses of their informal communication systems?
3. What is the relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and their attitudes toward their informal communication systems?
4. What is the relationship between the leadership

behavior of principals and the position held by the key communicators of their informal communication systems?

Significance of the Problem

Although managers sometimes succumb to the wish that the informal communication system would disappear, such a system cannot be abolished, destroyed, hidden or successfully ignored. If it is suppressed in one place, it surfaces in another. If its sources are cut off, it moves to another source. Since managers must live with informal communication systems, it would be useful to study some strategies which would make the informal communication system serve the goals and objectives of managers. It would also be beneficial to compare how such systems are handled by managers displaying different leadership behaviors.

Principals must be able to assess accurately the influence of their informal communication systems. Incongruities growing out of the uncertainties of relationships within the organization can be a source of extreme problems. Uncertainty, dissatisfaction, and reduced trust levels between formal and informal representatives interfere with the development of clearly defined procedures for goal accomplishments. Thus, ascertaining the relationship between the leadership behavior of the formal leader of the school and the manner in which the communication aspect of his informal structure functions may lead to useful information which would allow the leader to deal more effectively

in meeting the demands of his organization and the needs of the individuals in that organization.

This study can provide a reference for the task of helping principals analyze and better understand the influence an informal communication system has on their organizations. As principals become aware of who the key communicators of their informal communication systems are, principals can encourage the communicators to have the facts and to support the objectives of the organization. And, perhaps, in this manner, principals can better meet the needs of the individuals in the organization. As principals learn how the informal communication system operates, they are better able to influence it. As principals become aware of what information the informal communication system carries, they are better able to attack directly whatever untruths it carries.

Definitions of Terms

The terms used in the study are defined as follows:

1. There are two information systems in every organization.

The formal system consists of memos, reports, house organs, and official promulgations. It carries management's view of what is going on within the organization -- or at least what management would like the troops to believe is going on.

The informal system consists of people talking to one another in the course of the working day. This network carries rumors, trial balloons, and individual percep-

tions of what participants think is going on.¹²

The informal communication system (also known as the grapevine) is the communication arm of every informal organization. Since a grapevine has no official standing it cannot be officially rewarded for helpful action nor held responsible for harmful behavior. The grapevine is only an informal system of spreading information.¹³

Informal communication systems exist in every organization. The level of activity in transmitting information along the grapevine ranges from dormant to operant. The informal communication system ranges from the mundane social discourse people engage in to the constant and active dispersion of information of a factual or non-factual nature.

2. Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation. Leadership process is a function of the leader, the followers and other situational variables: $L=f(l,f,s)$.¹⁴

3. Leadership style is the behavior pattern that the individual exhibits when attempting to influence the

¹² Marilyn Moats Kennedy, Office Politics (Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 48-49.

¹³ Keith Davis, "The Organization That's Not on the Chart," Supervisory Management (July 1961), p.5.

¹⁴ Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, Management of Organizational Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1977), p. 84.

activities of others as perceived by those others.¹⁵

4. Leader(ship) behavior is the self-perception of the leader as determined by the LEAD-self questionnaire of Hersey and Blanchard. The Hersey and Blanchard questionnaire places the leader into one of the four leadership behavior quadrants (Figure 5) of the Situational Leadership Theory Model.¹⁶ As proposed by Hersey and Blanchard, the components of leadership behavior include task behavior and relationship behavior.

- a. Task behavior is the extent to which a leader engages in one-way communication by explaining what each follower is to do as well as when, where, and how tasks are to to be accomplished. 17
- b. Relationship behavior is the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication by providing socio-emotional support, "psychological strokes" and facilitating behaviors. 18

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 103.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 103-104.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 104.

Examples of each behavior follow in Table 1.

<u>Leadership Behaviors</u>	
<u>Task Behaviors</u>	<u>Relationship Behaviors</u>
Role Definition	Personal consideration
Task Structure:	Socio-emotional Support
Task Definition	
Procedures	
Timeline	
Goal Setting Responsibilities	Performance Reinforcement
Resource Identification	Communication Networks

Table 1

5. Level of activity on an informal communication system refers to how much or how constant the action is on the grapevine. Level of activity is the liveliness of the grapevine; it is the quantity of information which is transmitted on the grapevine.

6. Use of informal communication systems refers to the methods employed by individuals to accomplish their own objectives through their grapevines. Individuals avail themselves of grapevines in order to put into action strategies designed to suit their purposes.

7. Attitude toward informal communication systems refers to the way individuals think, act, or feel towards

their grapevines. It also includes the way individuals behave toward their grapevines.

8. Key communicators are those people in the organization who talk to and are believed by a large number of people. They are informal leaders who are looked to for their opinions and judgement.¹⁹

9. Elementary school is a school having a curriculum offering work in any combination of grades one to eight or from the preprimary grades to grade eight or as ending with grade six, as in places in which the six-six and six-three plans are in common use.²⁰

10. Principal is the administrative head and professional leader of a school division or unit, such as an elementary school; a highly specialized full-time administrative officer who is subordinate to the superintendent of schools.²¹

Limitations of the Study

1. It is not the purpose of this study to prove that one style of leadership is more productive than another. Rather, this study examined relationships and correlations between particular leadership behavior and

¹⁹ Frederick C. Wendel, "The Communication Grapevine," in The Public Relations Almanac for Educators (Camp Hill, Pa.: Educational Communication Center, 1980), p. 47.

²⁰ Carter V. Good (ed.), The Dictionary of Education, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., 1973), p.209.

²¹ Ibid., p. 436.

specific aspects of informal communication systems.

2. The population of the study was limited to elementary school principals in south Cook County. Principals of schools which had the terms "junior high", "middle school", and "upper grade center" in their official title were excluded from the study. Such self-declared schools differ structurally, philosophically, and in terms of curriculum from the other elementary schools in the population. Secondary principals were excluded from the population because the secondary school with its larger teaching staff would more likely have a structured informal communication system with a high level of activity.

3. Application of one theory of leadership model, the Situational Leadership Theory of Hersey and Blanchard, was utilized in the analysis of the data. Limiting the analysis of the data to one theoretical model restricted the utilization of other theories which might be relevant to the data. In order to avoid confusion by the use of several theories, one, a recent development in leadership studies, was selected to provide the theoretical framework for this study.

4. Honesty of response by the principals and their communicators to the questionnaires and interview items was assumed. Because the individual respondents were actively involved in the process of interacting with the school environment, both formal and informal, the particular

satisfactions and dissatisfactions resulting from these interactions may have affected responses to the instrumentations. Also, responses reflect the views of principals only at one point in time; there is no assurance that principals would give the same responses at a later time.

Summary and Overview

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between the leadership behavior of elementary school principals and the manner in which their informal communication systems function.

In Chapter I, the rationale upon which the study was based was stated. Chapter I also included definitions of terms used in the study, and the limitations which were imposed upon the study.

Chapter II provided information appropriate to the purposes of the study. The review of the related literature and research was conducted in the areas of leadership: its development and its various styles. The review was also conducted in the area of informal organization and its communication aspect, the informal communication system. Aspects of the informal communication system reviewed included: level of activity on informal communications systems, uses of informal communication systems by managers, attitudes of managers toward their informal communication systems, and the position held by the key communicators of informal communication systems.

Chapter III, the Design of the Study, presented descriptions of the following: hypotheses of the study, population and sample of the study, instrumentation used in the study, procedures used in the study and treatment of the data.

Chapter IV analyzed the data gathered from the following sources: questionnaires--LEAD-self, LEAD-other, and "Informal Communication in Organizations," and interviews -- "Assessing Informal Communication", Principals' form and Key Communicators' form. The questionnaire responses and interview tapes from randomly selected elementary principals in south Cook County were presented and analyzed keeping in mind the basic questions posed in this study.

Finally Chapter V presented the conclusions and recommendations of the study resulting from the review of the literature as applied to the questions addressed in the study and analysis of questionnaire responses and interview data.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between certain leadership behavior characteristics displayed by principals of public elementary schools and the manner in which their informal communication systems function.

An informal communication system exists in every organization.¹ The leadership behavior demonstrated by the manager of an organization may be a contributing factor to the manner in which the informal communication system of that organization functions. Before investigating any relationship between leadership behavior and informal communication systems, each topic will be reviewed separately. Thus a review of the literature on management and leadership precedes the review of informal communication systems.

Since research into leadership behavior did not evolve chronologically, but in several instances developed simultaneously, the review of the literature did not attempt to present a sequenced development of leadership

¹Keith Davis, Human Relations at Work (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1972), p. 212.

behavior. Therefore, older quotes were interspersed with more recent statements when the inclusion of such quotes would assist in the exposition of the findings of researchers on leadership behavior. Nor was an attempt made to include all aspects of informal communication systems in the review of the literature.

Leadership/Management Development

The development of psychology and sociology as human sciences, with their methodologies and accumulations of knowledge, has provided a beginning in the efforts to understand leadership.² Spotts has stated, "Although literally hundreds of leadership studies have been conducted during the last two decades, there is, at present, no universally accepted theory of leadership."³

In studying leadership, efforts have been made to pursue psychological studies of leadership. Such studies attempted to identify traits that contributed to leadership ability to refine the ways of measuring these traits in people. The view of leadership as an interactive process between members of the group, especially as interaction

²Robert G. Owens, Organizational Behavior in Schools (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.118.

³James V. Spotts, "The Problem of Leadership: A Look at Some Recent Findings of Behavioral Science Research," in Human Relations in Management, ed. S. G. Huneryager and I. L. Heckmann (Cincinnati: Southwestern Publishing Company, 1967), p. 303.

between the leader and the rest of the group has been the focus of sociological studies of leadership. Behavioral studies focused on observed behavior. The emphasis of these studies was on observed behavior in certain situations. They focused attention on events that are happening (or appear to be happening.)⁴

The Psychological Approach to the Study of Leadership

In an attempt to distinguish leaders from nonleaders, early studies of leadership reflected the psychological approach, also known as the trait approach, to the study of leadership. This approach maintained that effective leaders possess a unique combination of specific leadership traits or personality characteristics. This approach has been characterized as the "great man" concept of leadership. Researchers who espoused the psychological approach attempted to identify the traits that contributed to leadership ability and to refine the ways of measuring these traits in people.

Barnard stated that the significant traits that distinguished leaders from their followers were physique, technical skill, perception, knowledge, memory, imagination, determination, persistence, endurance, and courage.⁵

⁴Owens, pp. 119-120.

⁵Chester I. Barnard, The Function of the Executive (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938), p. 260.

Bird reviewed twenty leadership studies in which seventy-nine traits were identified which related to leadership. Among the traits so identified were: intelligence, initiative, sense of humor, extraversion, enthusiasm, self-confidence, sympathy, fairness, and courage.⁶

In a survey of studies of traits reported in 1948, Stogdill identified six major classifications of leadership characteristics:

1. Capacity (intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality, judgement)
2. Achievement (scholarship, knowledge, athletic accomplishments)
3. Responsibility (dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence, desire to excel)
4. Participation (activity, sociability, cooperation, adaptability, humor)
5. Status (socioeconomic position, popularity)
6. Situation (mental level, status, skills, needs and interests of followers, objectives to be achieved, etc.)⁷

Stogdill continued that characteristics may vary with the situation. Although Stogdill classified leadership traits, traits were not found to be consistently related to leadership. Stogdill summarized, "The trait approach tended

⁶Charles Bird, Social Psychology (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940), p. 379.

⁷Ralph M. Stogdill, "Personal Factors Associated With Leadership: A Survey of the Literature," The Journal of Psychology 25 (1948), p. 64.

to treat personality variables in an atomistic fashion, suggesting that each trait acted singly to determine leadership effects."⁸

Gouldner discussed the weaknesses of the psychological approach to the study of leadership. He summarized the inadequacies of trait studies:

1. Those proposing trait lists usually do not suggest which of the traits are most important and which least.

2. Some of the traits mentioned in a single list are not mutually exclusive.

3. Trait studies do not discriminate between traits facilitating ascent to leadership and those enabling it to be maintained.

4. Typically, most trait studies raise questions concerning the organization of behavior, the range of recurring behavior patterns manifested by individuals.

5. The study of personalities of leaders in terms of traits involves certain debatable assumptions regarding the nature of personality. It seems to be believed that the personality of the leader can be described if all the traits by which it is composed are determined. Implicit is the notion that a personality is the sum of its component traits.⁹

⁸Ibid, p. 82.

⁹Alvin W. Gouldner (ed.), Studies in Leadership (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1965), pp. 23-24.

Regarding the negligible results researchers obtained using the psychological approach to the study of leadership, Owens noted that the research literature does not substantiate that this approach was particularly productive or promising for understanding leadership. Psychologists were unable to clarify which traits were most important in specific leadership positions. Since researchers could not accurately measure various personal traits, it was difficult to be very precise in specifying the perfect "mix" of personal attributes.¹⁰ Seldom, if ever, did any two lists generated by the trait researchers agree on the essential traits and characteristics of effective leadership. The trait approach to leadership, as it has been used in most studies reported in the literature, yielded negligible, and often contradictory results. Sanford summarized the psychological approach to leadership as follows: There are either no general leadership traits, or they cannot be described using familiar psychological terms. Sanford continued that in a specific situation, leaders do have traits which set them apart from followers, but what traits set what leaders apart from what followers will vary from situation to situation.¹¹

¹⁰Owens, p. 110.

¹¹Fillmore H. Sanford, "Research on Military Leadership," in Psychology in the World Emergency, ed., John C. Flanagan (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1952), p. 51.

The "great man" approach did not adequately explain the concept of leadership. Researchers turned to another approach -- the study of the leader in relation to group.

The Sociological Approach to the Study of Leadership

The psychological approach was followed by the sociological approach to the study of leadership. Sociological researchers marshalled their efforts toward the study of factors which surrounded the leader and his group. The efforts of researchers were concerned with the situational approach to leadership.

Bogardus made the following observations regarding the sociological aspect of leadership:

The development of leadership depends on studying situations and on acquiring skill in them. In order to "learn" leadership a person analyzes situations and develops appropriate techniques for controlling them. By anticipating situations a person may become a leader, while others are likely to run around in circles. ¹²

Regarding the sociological approach to leadership, Bird commented that to understand leadership the prevailing situations, desires, and purposes of the led must be considered. The leader, then, must possess knowledge or skills which are appropriate to his particular situation. Leadership is a function, in part, of group behavior and of the social organization. Successful leadership requires an

¹² Emory S. Bogardus, "Leadership and Social Situations," Sociology and Social Research 16(1931-32), p. 164.

adaption of the personality traits of the leader to the demands of his complex situation. As Bird noted, "The variety of the social situations calling for leadership means that men who are leaders in one situation will not often be leaders in another."¹³ In his analysis of leadership, Gibb stated that leadership is not an attribute of the personality of the individual, but is a quality of his role within a specified social system. Viewed in relation to the group, leadership is a quality of its structure.¹⁴

Several authors used similar concepts to describe situational leadership. Eaton¹⁵ maintained that leadership varies with each group and the circumstances in which it operates. Bavelas¹⁶ contended that almost any group member may become the leader of the group under circumstances which enable him to perform the required functions of leadership. A leader remains so, according to Davey¹⁷, as long as he contributes to the group needs and goals at a particular

¹³ Bird, pp. 375-377.

¹⁴ Cecil A. Gibb, "The Principles and Traits of Leadership," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 42 (July 1947), p. 267.

¹⁵ Joseph W. Eaton, "Is Scientific Leadership Selection Possible?," in Studies in Leadership, ed., Alvin W. Gouldner, (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1965), p. 619.

¹⁶ Alex Bavelas, "Leadership: Man and Function," Administrative Science Quarterly 4 (March 1960), p. 494.

¹⁷ A. G. Davey, "Leadership in Relation to Group Achievement," Educational Research 11 (June 1969), p. 186.

time. If group goals and needs change, the leader might find it difficult to maintain his position.

In describing the sociological approach, Huneryager and Heckman¹⁸ wrote that the successful leader adapts his style of leadership to his situation. As the situation changes, the leader changes his leadership style. Spotts¹⁹ noted that this approach postulates the notion of emergent leadership -- situational leaders arise in groups when necessary to meet the demands of new situations. In 1974, Stogdill protested that his review, along with Bird's, had been cited frequently in support of the view that leadership is entirely situational and that no personal characteristics are predictive of leadership. This view overemphasized the situational, and underemphasized the personal nature of leadership. Stogdill indicated that different leadership skills and traits are required in different situations.²⁰

The sociological approach to the study of leadership emphasized that leadership is a function of the situation of the group -- group needs, group goals and the environment in which the leader and his group find themselves. In an attempt to reconcile the sociological approach with the

¹⁸ S.G. Huneryager and I.L. Heckman, ed. Human Relations in Management (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1967), p. 245.

¹⁹ Spotts, p. 308.

²⁰ Ralph Stogdill, Handbook of Leadership (New York: The Free Press, 1974), p. 72.

trait approach to the study of leadership, researchers treated these approaches as components of leadership and studied the interaction between the personality of the leader and the situation of his group.

The Behavior Approach to the Study of Leadership

A more recent approach to the study of leadership, the behavioral approach, has recognized that although people involved in leadership do possess personal traits and are functioning in a situation, the emphasis is on observed behavior within an organization. Halpin described the behavioral approach to the study of leadership by stating that leadership behavior is not determined either innately or situationally. One determinant does not have to be rejected on the acceptance of the other. Either determinant is possible, as is any combination of the two.²¹ Halpin identified leader behavior

as the behavior of a leader functioning vis-a-vis members of a group in an endeavor to facilitate the solution of group problems. The behavior of the leader and the behavior of group members are inextricably interwoven, and the behavior of both is determined to a great degree by formal requirements imposed by the institution of which the group is a part. 22

Relative to the importance, value, and promise of a

²¹Andrew W. Halpin, Leadership Behavior of School Superintendents (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, 1956), p. 12.

²²Andrew W. Halpin, Theory and Research in Administration (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1966), p. 81.

behavioral approach to the study of leadership, Hersey and Blanchard stated:

From observations of the frequency (or infrequency) of certain leader behavior in numerous types of situations, theoretical models can be developed to help leaders make some predictions about the most appropriate leader behavior for their present situation. 23

Hemphill approached the problem of leadership in an operational manner. Hemphill wrote that leadership may be said to be the behavior of an individual while he is involved in directing group activities. Hemphill continued that in accepting a behavioral viewpoint of leadership, the fit between the behavior of the individual and the demands of the situation is examined as a criteria of the quality of leadership. Adequate leadership is a judgement of how satisfactory the behavior of the leader is as a response to the demands of the social situation in which the leader is functioning.²⁴

Cartwright and Zander asserted that the major problem associated with the behavioral approach to the study of leadership was that it is difficult to separate assumptions about what leadership should be from research on what

²³Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, Management of Organizational Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1977), p. 89.

²⁴John K. Hemphill, Situational Factors in Leadership (Columbus, Ohio: Bureau of Business Research, College of Commerce and Administration, The Ohio State University, (1949), p. 5.

consequences follow specific leadership practices.²⁵

The number of specific leadership practices that are possible is nearly endless and "because we can never measure all the behavior of an individual, any measurement procedure we adopt must entail some form of selection."²⁶ Following, then are selected interrelated theories of leadership that have as their basis the behavioral approach to the study of leadership. In addition, these theories have attempted to propose various variables associated with leadership behavior.

Leadership Contingency Model

Fiedler reported that his contingency model of leadership effectiveness holds that the effectiveness of a group depends on the interaction between the personality of the leader and the situation. Specifically, the motivational structure of the leader (that is, the goals to which he gives the highest priority) must be matched with the degree to which the situation gives the leader control and influence over the outcomes of his decisions.²⁷ Fiedler based his theory on what he terms "situational favorableness." This basically indicates the degree to which the

²⁵Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander ed., Group Dynamics (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968), p. 535.

²⁶Halpin, Theory, p. 86.

²⁷Fred E. Fiedler, "The Leadership Game: Matching the Man to the Situation," Organizational Dynamics 4 (Winter, 1976), p. 9.

leader has control and influence and, therefore, believes that he can determine the outcome of the group interaction. Fiedler generally measures situational favorableness on the basis of three variables: (1) the personal relationship of the leader with his group members (leader-member relations); (2) the degree of structure in the task that the group will perform (task structure); and (3) the power and authority that the position of the leader provides (position power). There seems to be a parallel between leader-member relations and what other theorists term as relationship behavior, while the concepts of task structure and position power parallel the concept of task. Fiedler considered the leader-member relations to be the most important of the three variables, while the position power dimension is the least important.²⁸

In the Leadership Contingency Model, there are eight possible combinations of these three situational variables which can occur. As each group is high or low in each of the three dimensions, the group will fall into one of the eight situations. This is depicted in Table 2.²⁹

According to this Model, exerting leadership influence would be easier in a group in which the members like a powerful leader with a clearly defined job and where the job

²⁸ Fred E. Fiedler, "Engineer the Job to Fit the Manager, Harvard Business Review 43(October 1965), p. 118.

²⁹ Ibid.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Leader-member Relations	Good	Good	Good	Good	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
Task Structure	Structured		Unstructured		Structured		Unstructured	
Leader Position Power	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak

Table 2
Eight situations of the Leadership Contingency Model

to be done is clearly laid out (cell #1); it would be difficult in a group where a leader is disliked, has little power, and has a highly ambiguous job (#8). Fiedler indicated that both the directive, managing, task-oriented leader and the non-directive, human relations-oriented leader are successful under some conditions. Which leadership style is best depends on the favorableness of the particular situation for the leader. According to Fiedler,

in very favorable or in very unfavorable situations, for getting a task accomplished by group effort the autocratic, task-controlling, managing leadership works best. In situations intermediate in difficulty, the nondirective, permissive leader is more successful. 30

Fiedler seems to suggest in this Model that although there are eight combinations of three variables, there are only two basic styles of leadership behavior, task-oriented and relationship-oriented behavior. This suggests an either-or style of leadership and can be depicted as follows:³¹

Task-oriented style	Relationship-oriented style	Task-oriented style
Favorable Leadership Situation	Situation Intermediate in Favorableness for the Leader	Unfavorable Leadership Situation

Table 3
Leadership Styles Appropriate for Various Group Situations

³⁰Ibid., p. 119.

³¹Hersey and Blanchard, p. 102.

Fiedler contended that group performance can be improved either by changing the motivational structure of the leader or else by modifying his leadership situation. Since it is Fiedler's position that it is very difficult for the leader to change his personality, the more profitable alternative would be to modify the leader's situation. Fiedler advocated selecting a person for certain kinds of jobs, and not others, assigning him certain tasks, giving him more or less responsibility or giving him leadership training in order to increase his power and influence.³²

In summary, Fiedler's model involves the leader with his personality and style, and the situation the leader finds himself in. The situation is viewed in terms of favorableness. Different leader personality types perform more satisfactorily under different situations. Fiedler would select leaders for certain situations or change the situation since it is difficult for leaders, with the constraints of their personalities, to vary significantly their leadership style.

The Tannenbaum Leadership Process Model

Tannenbaum and Schmidt have constructed a model depicting a wide variety of styles of leader behavior available to a manager. Each type of action is related to the degree of authority used by the manager and to the amount of

³²Fiedler, "The Leadership Game," p. 12.

freedom available to his subordinates in reaching decisions. This model is depicted in Figure 1.³³

The actions seen on the extreme left characterize the manager who maintains a high degree of control, while those seen on the extreme right characterize the manager who releases a high degree of control. Neither extreme is absolute; authority and freedom are never without their limitations.³⁴

Regarding the leadership behavior continuum, Tannenbaum and Schmidt continued that depending upon the situation, the manager varies his behavior along this continuum. The factors that affect the style to be selected are: (1) factors related to the manager himself which include a style consistent with his personality, his values, his confidence in his subordinates, his leadership inclinations and his feelings of security in the situation, his behavior repertory (action flexibility) and his skill in selecting appropriate communication behaviors; (2) factors related to other members of the group which include individual employee personality variables, his needs, attitudes, values and feelings and expectations; and (3) factors related to the situation at hand which include environmental pressures stemming from the organization with its values and

³³Robert Tannenbaum, Irving R. Weschler, and Fred Massarik, Leadership and Organization (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961), p. 69.

³⁴Ibid.

Boss-centered
Leadership

Subordinate-oriented
Leadership

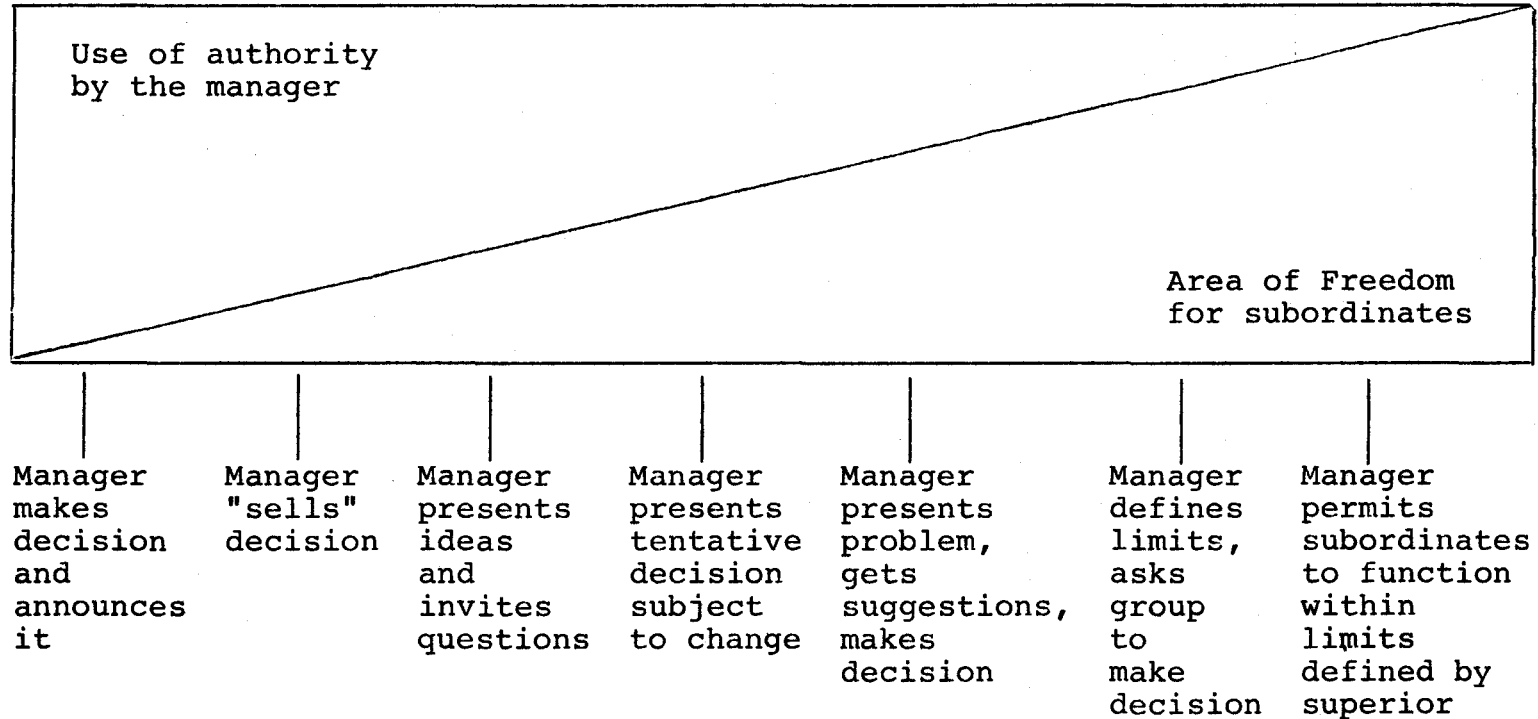


Figure 1 -- Continuum of Leadership Behavior

traditions, work group effectiveness, the nature of the problem, and the pressures of time.³⁵

Effective leadership according to the Tannenbaum Model is a function of the dynamic interrelationship of the personality characteristics of the leader and the follower and the characteristics of the situation in which they find themselves. Being an effective leader requires a manager to be skillful in discarding irrelevant and incorrect perceptions; clearly recognize the goals toward which he wishes to direct influence; have available an adequate repertory of communication behaviors; and, be skillful in selecting those behaviors which are most appropriate for the accomplishment of the goals which he seeks. An effective leadership style is one that results in influencing behavior toward goal attainment.³⁶

In summary, the implications of the Tannenbaum Leadership Process Model are that the successful leader must be aware of those forces which are most relevant to his behavior at any given time. He accurately understands himself, his followers, and the organizational environment in which he operates. The successful leader is able to behave appropriately in light of these beliefs. If direction is in order, he is able to direct; if participative freedom

³⁵Ibid., pp. 74-77.

³⁶Ibid., p. 42.



is demanded, he is able to provide such freedom.

The Fiedler model and Tannenbaum model depicted leadership behavior on a continuum from autocratic to democratic behavior of the leader. Leadership has also been depicted by the use of two axes -- one depicting task behavior and one relationship behavior. Several of those studies which use the two axes approach will now be discussed.

The Ohio State Leadership Studies

In 1945, the Bureau of Business Research, at The Ohio State University, undertook a comprehensive study of leadership designed to examine and measure performance or behavior of leaders.

One of the principal objectives of the resulting studies involved the testing of hypotheses concerning the situational determination of leader behavior. One hypothesis tested stated that performance of a person in a position of leadership will be determined in large part by demands made upon the leader. A second tested hypothesis stated that status, work performance, personal interactions, responsibility, authority and personal behavior patterns combine to constitute a minimum set of variables necessary for a study of leadership in organized groups.³⁷

³⁷ Ralph M. Stogdill and Alvin E. Coons, Leadership Behavior: Its Description and Measurement (Columbus, Ohio: The Bureau of Business Research, College of Commerce and Administration, The Ohio State University, 1957), p. 1.

Research over the years led to the development of the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). The LBDQ offered a means of defining leader behaviors operationally, and has made it possible to submit to empirical test, additional specific hypotheses about leader and group behavior.³⁸ The Leadership Opinion Questionnaire (LOQ) was also developed during the Ohio State Leadership studies. While the LBDQ was completed by the associates of the leader, the LOQ was scored by the leaders themselves.³⁹

As a result of factor analyses of leadership behavior questionnaires, two orthogonal factors were found. Although there are no universally accepted labels for these two factors, the terms consideration and structure have been widely used. Generally,

Consideration refers to the degree to which a leader acts in a warm and supportive manner and shows concern and respect for his subordinates. Structure refers to the degree to which a leader defines and structures his own role and those of his subordinates toward goal attainment. 40

In studying leader behavior, the Ohio State staff found that Initiating Structure and Consideration were separate and distinct dimensions. A high score on one dimension did not necessitate a low score on the other. The

³⁸ Halpin, Theory, p. 291.

³⁹ Hersey and Blanchard, Management, p. 94.

⁴⁰ Gary Yukl, "Toward a Behavioral Theory of Leadership," in Readings in Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, ed., W.E. Scott and L.L. Cummings, (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1973), p. 310.

behavior could be described as any mix of both dimensions. "Thus, it was during these studies that leader behavior was first plotted on two separate axes rather than on a single continuum."⁴¹ Four quadrants were developed to show various combinations of Initiating Structure (task behavior) and Consideration (relationship behavior) as illustrated in Figure 2.⁴²

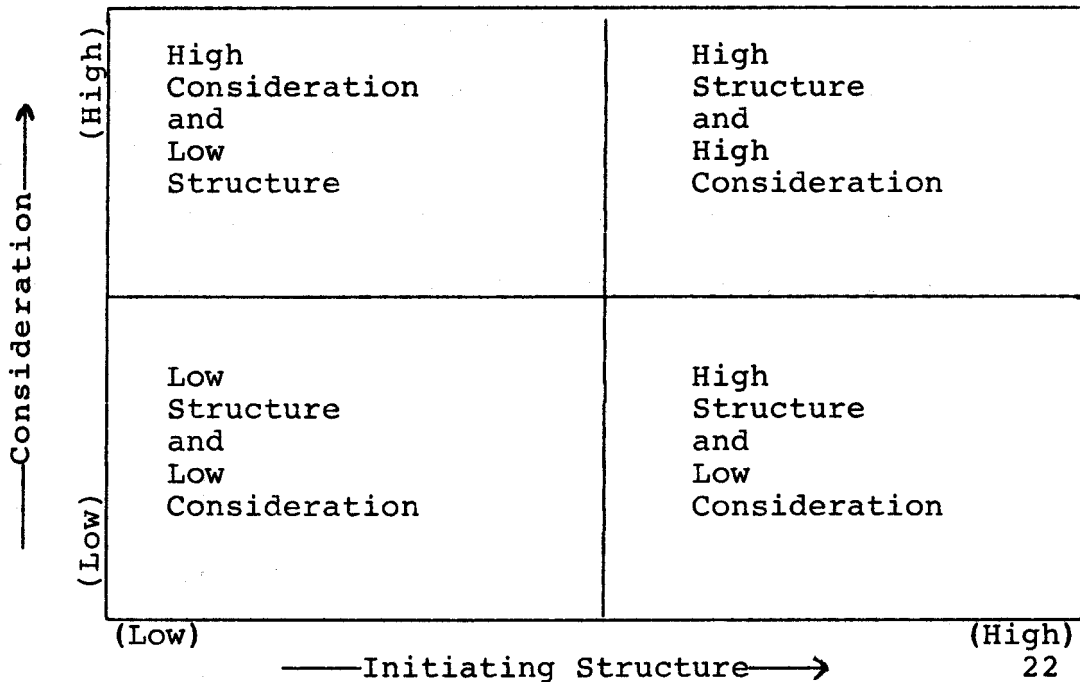


Figure 2 --The Ohio Leadership quadrants

Development of the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire, with its accompanying description of four quadrants

⁴¹Hersey and Blanchard, Management, p. 95.

⁴²Ibid.

of leader behavior, gave impetus for further studies of leader behavior.

The Managerial Grid

The Ohio State Leadership studies concentrated on two theoretical concepts, one emphasizing task accomplishment and the other stressing the development of personal relationships. Blake and Mouton have popularized these concepts in their Managerial Grid framework.

In the Managerial Grid, five different types of leadership based on concern for production (task) and concern for people (relationship) are represented in four quadrants similar to those identified by the Ohio State studies. Figure 3 graphically depicts the Managerial Grid.⁴³

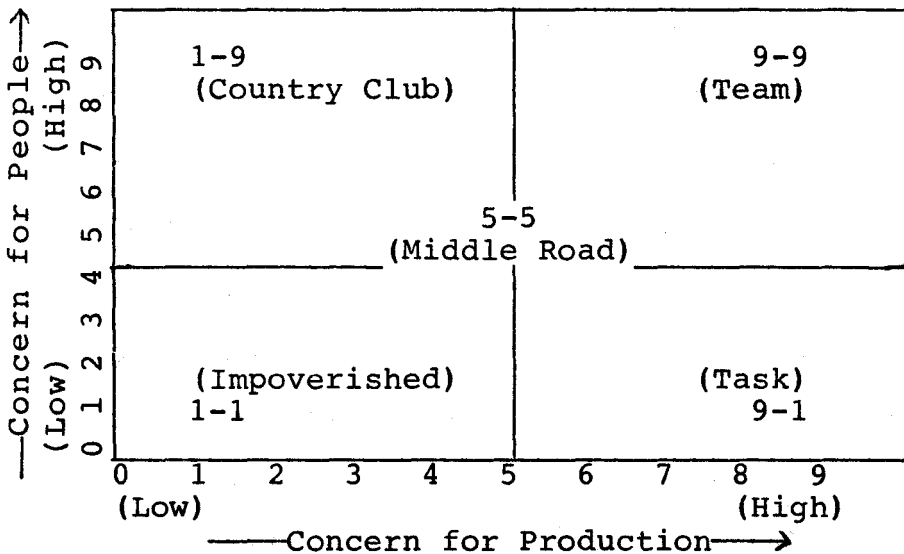


Figure 3 -- The Managerial Grid

⁴³ Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton, The New Managerial Grid (Houston, Texas: Gulf Publishing Company, 1978), p. 11.

For the sake of clarity, the following definitions are provided: Concern for production is defined as getting profit results for the organization. The emphasis is on results - the "bottom line."⁴⁴ Concern for people is defined as seeing subordinate-colleagues as people. The emphasis is on such things as trust obedience, sympathy, understanding, and support of another person facing adversity.⁴⁵

The two dimensions, concern for production on the horizontal scale and concern for people on the vertical scale, are pictured on the grid as nine point scales which denotes degrees of concern. As the ratings of the leader advance on the horizontal scale, production becomes more important to the leader. A leader with a rating of nine on the horizontal axis has a maximum concern for production. People become more important to the leader as his/her rating progresses up the vertical axis. A leader with a rating of nine on the vertical axis has maximum concern for people.

According to the Grid Model, there are five basic leadership styles that vary with the degree of concern for production and people espoused by a leader. The five leadership styles can be summarized as (1) impoverished (1-1), the 1-1 oriented manager does only the minimum required to remain with the organization; (2) country club

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 10.

(1-9), the primary attention of the manager is placed on promoting good feelings among organizational members; (3) task (9-1), the manager concentrates on maximizing production by exercising power and authority and achieving control over people through compliance; (4) middle-of-the road (5-5), the manager conforms to the status quo; and (5) team (9-9), the manager is goal-oriented and seeks to gain results on high quantity and quality through participation, involvement, commitment, and conflict-solving.⁴⁶

Although these five leadership styles constitute the focus of Managerial Grid research, Blake and Mouton acknowledged the existence of other managerial styles such as 9-5, 5-9, 9-3 or 8-4, etc. Blake and Mouton have chosen, however, not to specify the characteristics involved.⁴⁷ In paraphrasing Blake and Mouton, Williams stated that the 9-9 leadership style is always preferred. Blake and Mouton object to the notion that the style of the leader should change to meet the demands of each unique situation because such an approach undermines trust and respect.⁴⁸

Blake and Mouton conceded that managers move from one grid style to another, sometimes even shifting and adapting grid styles according to how that person views the

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 12.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸J. Clifton Williams, Human Behavior in Organizations (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Co.), p. 227.

situation. Blake and Mouton reconciled managerial styles that shift and change with their belief in a "best" style of leadership through the ideal of dominant and backup styles. Blake and Mouton stated that most managers have a dominant grid style as well as a backup style. When it is difficult for a manager to apply his dominant grid style, the manager reverts to his backup style. This is the style adopted when he is under pressure, tension, strain, frustration, or in situations of conflict that cannot be solved in his characteristic manner.⁴⁹

Reddin's 3-D Theory of Managerial Effectiveness

Reddin acknowledged that his theory is based on the work of others, notably the Ohio State Leadership Studies.⁵⁰ In a construct similar to the Ohio State Model and the Managerial Grid of Blake and Mouton, Reddin proposed a similar model with two dimensions of managerial style: task orientation and relationship orientation.

Reddin defined task orientation (TO) as "the extent to which a manager directs his own and his subordinates' efforts; characterized by initiating, organizing, and directing."⁵¹ Reddin defined relationship orientation (RO) as "the extent to which a manager has personal job

⁴⁹ Blake and Mouton, Managerial Grid, p. 14.

⁵⁰ William J. Reddin, Managerial Effectiveness (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970), p. 20.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 24.

relationships; characterized by listening, trusting, and encouraging."⁵²

Reddin proposed four basic leadership styles which were based on the dimensions of task orientation and relationship orientation. These four styles are depicted in Figure 4:⁵³

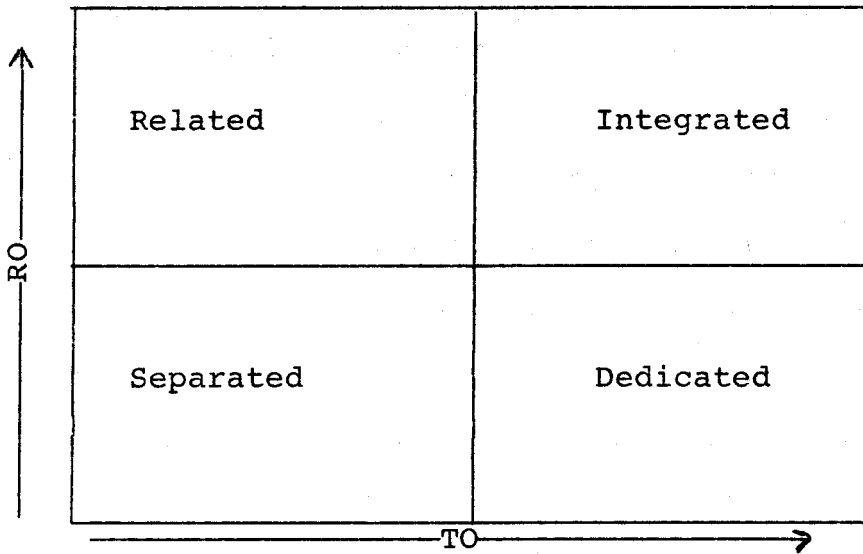


Figure 4 -- The 3-D Basic Styles

The four styles can be summarized as (1) the integrated style combines high task orientation and high relationship orientation; (2) the dedicated style describes managerial behavior which is high task orientation and which is dedicated to the job; (3) the related style describes high relationship orientation only; and (4) the separated style is

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., p. 27.

both low in task orientation and low in relationship orientation.⁵⁴

As with the other two dimensional models, The Ohio state Grid and the Managerial Grid, Reddin cautioned that:

It is important to remember that the four basic styles are a convenience and not a fact. The lines separating the four styles do not really exist; they were drawn to make it easier to talk about behavior. No one, therefore, is pigeonholed when called "related" or something else. The term, as with any style label means more like that style than like any other style -- only that. 55

The two dimensions, task orientation and relationship orientation, according to Reddin, were not to be taken in isolation. These two dimensions were related to managerial effectiveness in a variety of situations. Leadership effectiveness was the third dimension of the 3-D grid. A leadership style is effective when it is appropriate to a given situation. A leadership style is ineffective when it is inappropriate to a given situation. Reddin stressed that leadership style is not only effective or ineffective. Leadership style varies along a continuum of effectiveness. How well a leader performs establishes his position along this continuum.⁵⁶

Since there are different styles of managerial

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶William J. Reddin, "The 3-D Management Style Theory: A Typology Based on Task and Relationship Orientation," Training and Development Journal (April 1967), p.15.

behavior, Reddin has indicated that there are three basic skills necessary for effectively selecting and utilizing them: (1) The manager must know how to read a situation, that is, situational sensitivity; (2) he must have the skill to change the situations that need to be changed, that is, situational management skill; and (3) he must possess the capacity to vary his leadership style in accordance with the situational requirements, that is, style flexibility skill. The acquisition of these three skills is usually called experience.⁵⁷

The 3-D Theory of Leadership provides for effective and ineffective managerial styles which are based upon the situation, a basis for establishing leader flexibility, and a means of assisting the situation and the managerial style. Managerial effectiveness, in Reddin's view, can be increased by increasing the range of styles of the manager and by developing his skills in changing situations to match his most dominant style.

Situational Leadership Theory

Hersey and Blanchard have developed a framework useful to managers in diagnosing the demands of their situations. Although leaders may have the ability to identify clues in their environments, leaders may still not be effective unless they can adapt their leadership style to

⁵⁷ Reddin, Effectiveness, p. 14.

meet the demands of their environment.

Situational Leadership Theory is based upon the curvilinear relationship between three variables: (1) the amount of direction (task behavior) a leader provides, (2) the amount of socio-emotional support (relationship behavior) a leader provides, and (3) the perceived maturity level of the follower(s) on a specific task, function, or objective that the leader is attempting to accomplish. While all situational variables, such as leader, follower, job demands, time, etc. are important, the "emphasis in Situational Leadership Theory is on the behavior of the leader in relations to followers."⁵⁸ For the purpose of clarity, definitions are provided:

1. Task behavior is defined as the extent to which a leader engages in one-way communication by explaining what each follower is to do as well as where, and how tasks are to be accomplished. 59
2. Relationship behavior is defined as the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication by providing socio-emotional support, "psychological strokes" and facilitating behaviors. 60
3. Maturity is defined as the capacity to set high but attainable goals (achievement-motivation), willingness and the ability to take responsibility and education and/or experience of an individual or a group. 61

⁵⁸Hersey and Blanchard, Management, p. 168.

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 103-104.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 104.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 161.

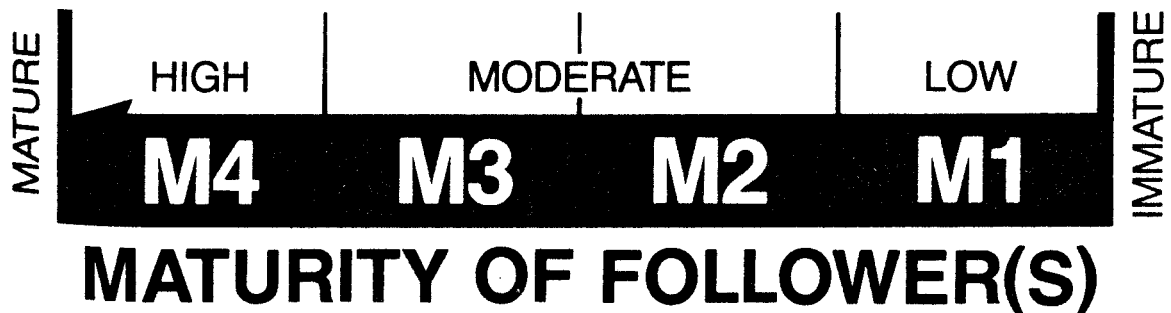
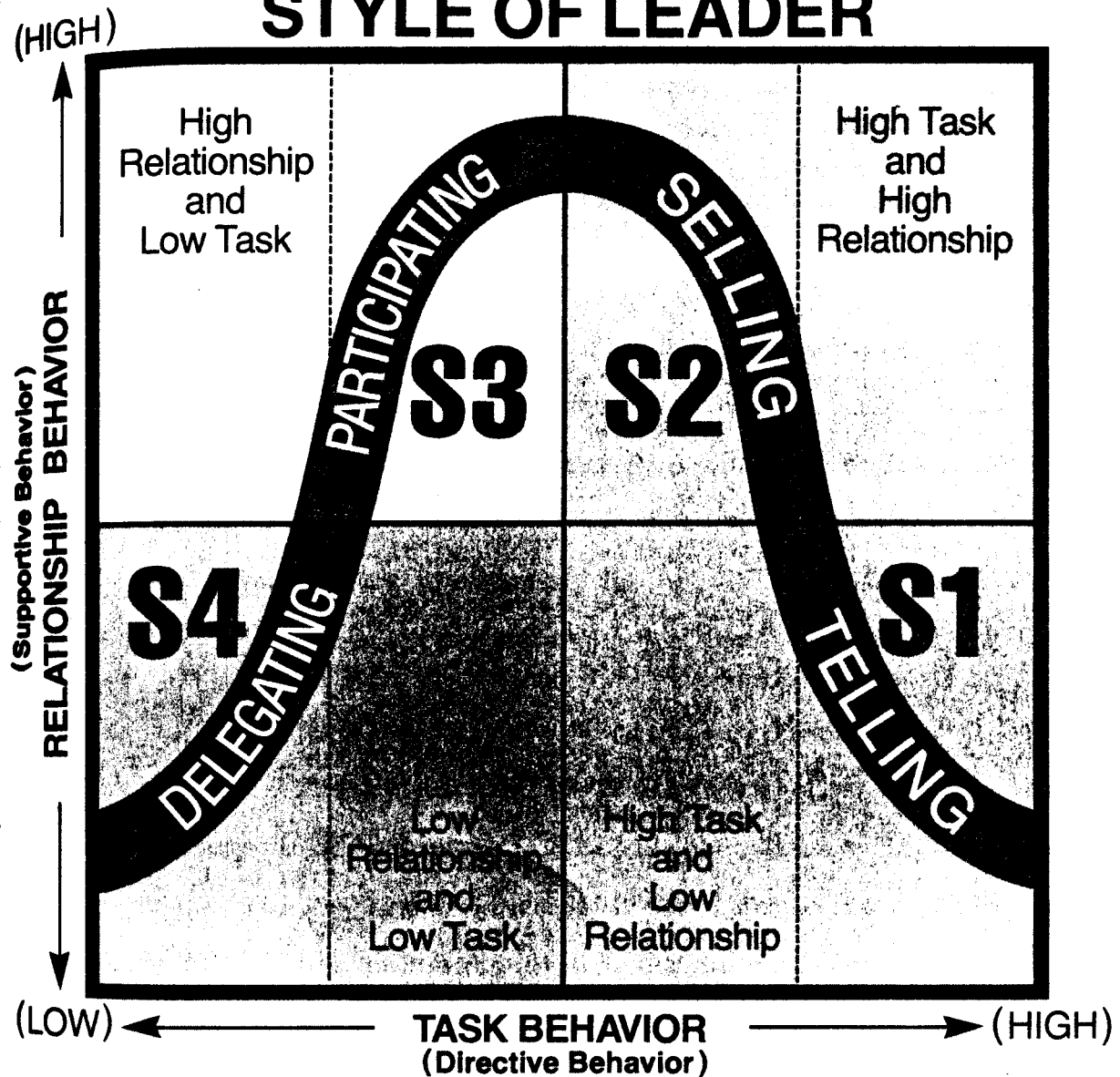
Basing their model on the results of the Ohio State Leadership Studies, Hersey and Blanchard developed a model which depicts the patterns of leader behavior, task and relationship behaviors, on two separate and distinct axes as shown in Figure 5.⁶²

⁶²Ibid., p. 168.

Figure 5

SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

STYLE OF LEADER



In Figure 5, Hersey and Blanchard have identified four leadership behavior quadrants:

1. High task/low relationship behavior ("telling") which is characterized by one-way communication in which the leader defines the roles of followers and tells them what, how, when, and where to do various tasks.
2. High task/high relationship behavior ("selling") which is characterized by the leader attempting through two-way communication and socio-emotional support to get the follower(s) psychologically to buy into decisions that have to be made.
3. High relationship/low task behavior ("participating") which is characterized by shared decision-making through two-way communication and much facilitating behavior from the leader since the follower(s) have the ability and knowledge to do the task.
4. Low relationship/low task behavior ("delegating") which is characterized by letting follower(s) "run their own show" through delegation and general supervision since the follower(s) are high in both task and psychological maturity. 63

Hersey and Blanchard credited Reddin's 3-D Management Style Theory as having influenced them greatly in the development of their Tri-Dimensional Leader Effectiveness Model. In the Effectiveness Model, Hersey and Blanchard integrated the concepts of leader style with situational demands of a specific environment. "When the style of a leader is appropriate to a given situation, it is termed effective; when the style is inappropriate to a given situation, it is termed ineffective."⁶⁴

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 105.

. Any of the four basic styles may be effective or ineffective depending on the situation. The difference between effective and ineffective behavior is the appropriateness of the behavior to the environment in which it is used. Effectiveness is represented on a continuum. Any given style in a particular situation could fall somewhere on this continuum from extremely effective to extremely ineffective. The Tri-Dimensional Leader Effectiveness Model does not depict a single ideal leader behavior style that is suggested as being appropriate in all situations.

Situational Leadership Theory, a recent analysis of leader behavior, was utilized to determine the leadership behavior of the principals included in this study.

Hersey and Blanchard insisted that the dimensions of the Managerial Grid (concern for production and concern for people) and Reddin's 3-D Management Theory (task orientation and relationship orientation) are attitudinal dimensions. Concern or orientation, Hersey and Blanchard maintained, is a feeling or an emotion toward something. On the other hand, the dimensions of the Ohio State Model (Initiating Structure and Consideration) and the Tri-Dimensional Leader Effectiveness Model (task behavior and relationship behavior) are dimensions of observed behavior. "Thus, the Ohio State and Leader Effectiveness models measure how people behave, while the Managerial Grid and the 3-D Management Style Theory measure predisposition toward production and

people."⁶⁵ The Tri-Dimensional Leader Effectiveness Model differs from the Ohio State Model in that it adds an effectiveness dimension.

Attitudinal leadership models and behavioral leadership models are not incompatible although they do measure different aspects of leadership. A problem develops when behavioral assumptions are made from an analysis of attitudinal dimensions of a model such as the Managerial Grid. As an example, although high concern for both production and people is desirable in organizations, it may be appropriate for high task and high relationship (9-9) managers to engage in a variety of different behaviors as they face different contingencies or situations in their environment.⁶⁶

Summary

The review of the literature in leadership/management development has highlighted the movement of researchers towards the behavioral approach to the study of leadership. Trait researchers attempted to identify the personality traits that contributed to leadership ability and to refine the ways of measuring these traits in people. Researchers were unable to clarify which traits were most important in specific leadership positions. Also, the inability to

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 108.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

measure accurately various personal traits made it difficult to be precise in specifying the perfect mix of personal attributes. The results of the research utilizing this approach suggested that leadership is dependent on a given situation. The pendulum of research swung from emphasis on the individual and his personality to focusing on the group and its dynamics. Situationist researchers investigated the hypotheses that group situations determine the nature and quality of leadership needed. Group needs or demands, rather than individual personality traits, became the determinants of leadership according to this approach. Criteria for leadership was based on what the leader does to help the group define its goals, achieve its objectives, or maintain its strength as a body. This approach denied the importance of the personality of the leader and concentrated solely on the dynamics of the group.

Both the psychological theorists and the sociological theorists attempted to explain leadership as an effect of a single set of forces. The interactive effects of individual and situational factors were overlooked. In an attempt to reconcile the various approaches to the study of leadership, the behavioral approach developed. Behavioral studies focused on observed behavior, and although they recognized that the people involved in leadership do possess personal traits and are functioning in a situation, these studies avoided making flat statements about causal rela-

tionships. The interaction of the personality of the leader and the situation may be determinants of observed behavior within an organization.

Leadership may be described as a decision-making process which involves the interaction of three variables: the personality traits of the individual, the maturity of the group and its members, and a criterion of effectiveness. These variables constitute the specific environment in which the individual leader must operate. Thus, leadership is a dynamic process based on interactive and interdependent components whose relationship to each other frequently change.

Informal Communication systems

The major topic investigated in this study was the informal communication system, also known as the grapevine, and its relationship to leadership behavior of elementary school principals. Since most of the research in the subject of this study was found in the field of management, this field provided much of the material in this section of the review of the related literature.

Definitions of informal organization have changed as the information concerning them has increased. For example, in 1938, Barnard⁶⁷ wrote that the informal organization is indefinite and structureless, and has no definite subdivi-

⁶⁷Barnard, p. 115.

sions. By 1950 Simon⁶⁸ saw informal organization as definitely influencing the decisions of the organization. Simon stated that no formal organization would operate effectively without an accompanying informal organization. The informal organization refers to interpersonal relations in the organization that affect decisions within it but are either omitted from the formal scheme or are not consistent with that scheme. In 1958, Griffiths⁶⁹ wrote that, in the past, the informal structure was thought to be subject to continual revision as new decisions faced the formal organization. But, at present, it appears that informal structures maintain themselves over a long period of time. Thus, in a relatively few years, the phenomenon which Barnard once described as "indefinite", "structureless", and having "no definite subdivisions", has come to be seen as one that is quite definite.

Iannaccone related that writers most often characterized formal and informal organizations as two contradictory groups. This characterization is a misconception which underlies most of the half-truths on this subject. Iannaccone suggested that conceptualizing organizational life as

⁶⁸Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behavior (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), p. 148.

⁶⁹Daniel E. Griffiths, "Administration as Decision-making," in Administrative Theory in Education, ed. Andrew W. Halpin, (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, 1958), pp. 127-128.

existing on a continuum with the formal organization at one end and with purely friendship groupings at the opposite end would be more fruitful. Between these ends lies a continuum of human relationships.⁷⁰

The formal and informal organization might exist in any of four orientations to one another. First, Davis concluded that the formal and informal communication systems of the organizations he studied were jointly active or jointly inactive.⁷¹ Barnard claimed that formal and informal organizations are interdependent aspects of the same phenomena. One cannot exist without the other; if one fails the other disintegrates.⁷²

Next, there is the possibility that if the formal organization is too weak to accomplish the task, the informal system is tempted to grow stronger to fill the void and hold the group together. Productivity is possible as long as the informal system supports organizational objectives. However, there is always the danger of the development of anti-management attitudes.⁷³

⁷⁰Daniel E. Griffiths, David L. Clark, D. Richard Wynn, and Lawrence Iannaccone, Organizing Schools for Effective Education (Danville, Ill.: The Interstate Printer & Publisher, Inc., 1962), p. 287.

⁷¹Keith Davis, "Management Communications and the Grapevine," Harvard Business Review 31 (September-October 1953), p. 45.

⁷²Barnard, p. 120.

⁷³Robert Dubin, Human Relations in Administration (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), p.141.

Thirdly, management might try to be strong and autocratic while attempting to suppress the informal organization. Under these conditions, informal organizations seem to gain strength as a counterforce to protect the group and make the work situation livable. The two opposing counterforces generate conflict, resulting in minimum productivity.⁷⁴

A fourth orientation of informal groups to the formal organization is neutrality. A neutral stance may result because the private interests of the group have no relationship to the work of the organization. Thus, the informal group may focus on pure sociability as the reason for its existence.⁷⁵ The activities of informal groups with each other can be independent of their working relations.

The most desirable combination of the formal and informal organization appears to be a predominant formal system to maintain unity towards objectives along with a well-developed informal system to maintain group cohesiveness and teamwork.⁷⁶ In other words, the informal organization needs to be strong enough to be supportive, but not strong enough to dominate. When this concept is applied to communication channels, formal and informal channels work effectively when they complement each other. Each carries

⁷⁴Ibid

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp 271-171.

information suited to its needs and capabilities so that together the two systems build effective communication in the organization.⁷⁷

According to Davis, informal groups arise and persist because they satisfy wants of their members. This function of informal organization helps preserve the integrity of the group as a group. A second function is the provision of social satisfaction. Informal organizations give a person recognition, status and further opportunity to relate to others.

A third informal group function is communication. In order to meet wants and to keep its members informed of what is taking place that may affect want satisfaction, the group develops systems and channels of communication. A fourth function is social control, by which the behavior of others is influenced and regulated.⁷⁸

It is the third function of informal organizations, communication, that will be the concern of the remaining review of the literature. For as Barnard wrote, communication is necessary to translate purpose into terms of concrete action -- what to do and when and where to do it.⁷⁹

Davis' numerous research studies led him to con-

⁷⁷Keith Davis, "The Care and Cultivation of the Corporate Grapevine," Dun's Interest 102(July 1972), p. 46.

⁷⁸Davis, Human Relations at Work, pp. 238-239.

⁷⁹Barnard, pp. 106-107.

clude that the informal communication system helps the organization complete its job of communication. Based on the findings of his study, Thomas concluded that within the organization the formal structure does not describe the actual communication structure.⁸⁰ It would be almost impossible for management to transmit formally all the variety of organizational information which is necessary to help employees feel a part of the organization. Formal plans, policies and communications cannot meet every problem in a dynamic situation because formal plans, etc. are pre-established and partly rigid. Some requirements can be better met by informal relations which can be more flexible and spontaneous.⁸¹ Newstrom, Monczka and Reif maintained that informal communication systems emerge when formal channels are too rigidly defined or too narrowly adhered to; when managers tend to withhold critical information from subordinates in order to increase their power; when the jobs of employees allow them too much free time away from their work; or when employees feel insecure about their future.

⁸⁰ Benjamin Thomas, "A Comparative Analysis of the Informal Communication Structure of Four Junior High Schools," (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Washington. 1974), p. 35.

⁸¹ Davis, Human Relations at Work, P. 244.

These situations reinforce the need of employees to send or receive information in organizations.⁸²

Jacoby visualized the formal organization as the blueprint for the way in which individuals within the organization should behave, while the informal organization describes ways in which they actually do behave.⁸³

Davis conducted a study in a small manufacturing company which confirmed his earlier research findings. Davis wrote that employees depend on the grapevine to help them understand their environment.⁸⁴ Although the word "grapevine" is often used synonymously with the word "gossip", the definition obscures the fact that most of the information passed through the grapevine tends to be business related.⁸⁵ The grapevine also helps interpret management to the workers so that the workers may be more supportive. The informal communication system helps translate the formal orders of management into employee language and, in this way, makes up for any management failures in

⁸² John W. Newstrom, Robert E. Monczka, and William E. Reif, "Perceptions of the Grapevine: Its Value and Influence," The Journal of Business Communication 11(Spring 1974), pp. 12-20A.

⁸³ Jacob Jacoby, "Examining the Other Organization," Personnel Administration 31(November-December 1968), p. 36.

⁸⁴ Keith Davis, "Making Constructive Use of the Office Grapevine," in Readings in Human Relations, ed. Keith Davis and William G. Scott (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 190.

⁸⁵ Marilyn Moats Kennedy, Office Politics (Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1980), p. 50.

communication.⁸⁶ The grapevine carries information which the formal system does not wish to carry and purposely leaves unsaid.

In addition to transmitting information that no one has thought to transmit formally, Simon stated that the grapevine is valuable as a barometer of "public opinion" in the organization. If the administrator listens to his informal system, it apprises him of the topics that are subjects of interest to organization members, and their attitudes towards these topics. The grapevine gives a manager much feedback about employees and their work experiences, thereby increasing the manager's understanding of what he needs to do to be a supportive manager and to gain the support of his subordinates.⁸⁷ The grapevine helps build teamwork, motivate people and create organizational identity.

According to Owens, in a school, as in other organizations, the free flow of useful decision making information depends more on interpersonal relationships between people in informal communication systems than the formal structure of the organization would indicate. One use the principal should make of his informal communication system is

⁸⁶ Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 226.

⁸⁷ Herbert A. Simon, "Informal Communication and the 'Grapevine'," in Human Relations in Administration, ed. Robert Dubin, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), p. 402.

to encourage the development of an emotionally free, non-threatening atmosphere in the organization where information will flow freely and the threat of power struggles and interpersonal conflicts will be reduced, promoting more effective decision making in the organization. 88

The remainder of this review corresponded to certain aspects of informal communication systems. These aspects included:

1. level of activity on a grapevine,
2. uses of informal communication systems by managers,
3. attitudes of managers toward their informal communication systems, and
4. the role of key communicators on a grapevine.

Level of Activity on Informal Communication Systems

Mandel and Hellweg in studying the informal communication system of a university concluded that the formal system of communication exists for the transmission of official messages through a formal structure to all members of an organization. The informal communication system, conversely, is situationally derived.⁸⁹

Davis agreed with Mandel and Hellweg. Davis stated that the informal communication system is more a product of the situation than it is of the person. Situationally

⁸⁸Owens, p. 99-100.

⁸⁹Jerry E. Mandel and Susan A. Hellweg, "Understanding and Influencing the Informal Communication System in the University," The Journal of the College and University Personnel Association 28(May 1977), p. 51.

derived means that given the proper situation and motivation anyone can become active on the grapevine.⁹⁰

The degree of grapevine activity is a measure of the spirit and vitality of the organization. A lively grapevine reflects the deep psychological need of people to talk about their jobs and their organizations as a central life interest. Without the grapevine, the organization would literally be sick.⁹¹

People tend to be active on the grapevine when they believe they have cause to be. The level of activity of the grapevine increases during periods of excitement and insecurity.⁹² For example, a grapevine will often "leak" information concerning such matters as faculty and staff promotions, reassignments, layoffs, or policy changes, in advance of official announcements through the formal communication system. The more important the information is thought to be, the more rapidly and widely the message will be spread.⁹³ Wendell stated that the bureaucratic climate has a germinating effect upon the grapevine when tempers become heated. When people and issues cool down, the grapevine be-

⁹⁰Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 225.

⁹¹Davis, "The Corporate Grapevine,"

⁹²Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 226.

⁹³Mandel and Hellweg, p. 51.

comes dormant.⁹⁴

Mandel and Hellweg concluded from their study that grapevines also are quite active when the formal system of communication withholds information concerning an important issue. The need to know is always present with employees of an organization. When there is a crisis, the need for information is paramount. The formal system of communication simply becomes overloaded, in a crisis, and does not provide needed information.⁹⁵ At critical times, traditional communication channels do not operate fast enough or involve the audience with the greatest need to know.⁹⁶

Mandel and Hellweg concluded that an overly active grapevine should be a signal to the administration that the formal communication system is not operating adequately. By providing needed information on important matters openly, honestly, and quickly, the administrator can use the formal communication system as a way to create better morale, solve crises and reduce the need for use of the informal communication system. During periods of excitement and insecurity, managers need to watch the grapevine with extra care and

⁹⁴Frederick C. Wendel, "The Communication Grapevine," in The Public Relations Almanac For Educators (Camp Hill, Pa.: Educational Communication Center, 1980), p. 32.

⁹⁵Mandel and Hellweg, p. 53.

⁹⁶Don Bagin, "Key Communicators--An Authorized Grapevine," in The Public Relations Almanac For Educators (Camp Hill, Pa.: Educational Communication Center, 1980), p. 46.

feed it true information to keep it from becoming uncontrollable.⁹⁷

The findings of Davis' 1953 study disagreed with the conclusions of Mandel and Hellweg. Davis found that the formal and informal communication systems tended to be jointly active or jointly inactive. Davis found that where formal communication was inactive, the grapevine did not rush in to fill the void. Instead, there was simply lack of any communication. Similarly where there was effective formal communication, there was an active grapevine.⁹⁸

People are also active on the grapevine when their friends and work associates are involved. It is human nature, according to Kennedy, that people like to hear everything about people they know.⁹⁹ If such information is not disseminated to the members of the organization, the members will fill in the gaps with their own conclusions.¹⁰⁰

People also are most active on the grapevine when they have news as distinguished from stale information. The greatest spread of information happens immediately after it is known. Therefore, it is important for the manager to disseminate the right story from the beginning.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 225.

⁹⁸ Keith Davis, "Management Communications", p. 45.

⁹⁹ Kennedy, p. 50.

¹⁰⁰ Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 226.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Uses of Informal Communication Systems

According to Simon, the informal communication system, is sometimes used by organization members, including managers, to advance their personal aims. Managers may use the informal communication system as a means of securing power in the organization.¹⁰² The system may also be used as a tool for tactics and maneuvers; it can be used in a coverup operation.

The informal communication system can be used by managers to develop group identity and interest in work. Information favorable to the organization may be effectively planted to circulate up and down the grapevine. The grapevine is a primary source of upward communication by providing an outlet for all members of the organization to tell someone else how they feel. The system can also be used to display information that is best handled informally.¹⁰³

By tapping into the informal communication system, the manager can acquire "tips". Kennedy maintained that advance information gives the manager lead time and thus, the opportunity to gain power. Lead time means time to plan a strategy or take advantage of any opportunity. Without lead time, the manager is forced to react to changes on the spur of the moment instead of controlling the change. Kennedy also advised managers to listen to the gripes, dreams

¹⁰²Simon, "Informal Communication," p. 401.

¹⁰³Wendel, pp. 33-34.

and general complaints carried by the informal network. These raw data are often the harbingers of problems that could surprise the manager down the road.¹⁰⁴

Attitudes Toward Informal Communication Systems

As a carrier of news and gossip among organizational members, the informal communication system often affects the affairs of management. The proof of this affect is the feelings that different managers have about their grapevines. Some regard the grapevine as evil; it regularly spreads rumors, destroys morale and reputations, leads to irresponsible actions, and challenges authority. Others regard it as a positive force because it acts as a safety valve and carries news fast. Still others regard it as a very mixed blessing.¹⁰⁵

Griffiths also expressed mixed viewpoints about the informal communication system. He stated that the administrator can regard these systems as relatively unrelated pressure points on the policy-making function of his staff. He can also regard them as instruments fully integrated with the formal policy-making function of his staff.¹⁰⁶

Bavelas and Barrett insisted that if one considers how intimate the relations are between communication

¹⁰⁴Kennedy, p. 50.

¹⁰⁵Davis, "Management Communications", p. 43.

¹⁰⁶Griffiths, Organizing Schools, p. 257.

channels and control, it is not surprising that the managers of organizations would prefer explicit and orderly communication lines rather than informal communication systems.¹⁰⁷

Huneryager and Heckman argued that people who consider informal communication undesirable undoubtedly do so because they do not understand it and utilize it properly. Some managers think and fear that unlike formal communication, informal communication is very difficult to control. These managers believe that on the grapevine, they have little to say about what will be communicated, when it will be transmitted, who will receive it, etc. If managers ignore the grapevine and do not listen to it and do not combat the misinformation being transmitted, then, of course, it cannot be controlled. If, on the other hand, managers study the grapevine by listening to it and by determining who its leaders are and what information it transmits, they can take actions that will ultimately lead to an integration of informal communication with the formal communication system.¹⁰⁸

In discussing expected results of their research study, Newstrom, Monczka, and Reif predicted that managers

¹⁰⁷Alex Bavelas and Dermot Barrett, "An Experimental Approach to Organizational Communication," Personnel 27 (March 1951), p. 367.

¹⁰⁸S.G. Huneryager and I.L. Heckman, Human Relations in Management (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1967), pp. 513-514.

would tend to dislike the grapevine because it robs them of their informational power and causes them to devote time and energy to dispelling rumors. Actual results supported their prediction. Fifty-three percent of the managers studied viewed the grapevine as a negative factor in their organizational environment. The sample group perceived the grapevine to be relatively unpleasant and worthless. Twenty-seven percent of the sample group perceived the grapevine as a considerable positive force in their work context. Neutrality toward the grapevine was expressed by the group in terms of the strength of the grapevine (38 percent) and its value (20 percent). Finally, the grapevine was perceived to be fairly pervasive in the organizations of the respondents. The grapevine was simultaneously perceived to be both negative and influential - a potentially troublesome situation.¹⁰⁹

In reporting the conclusions of their study, Newstrom, Monczka and Reif stated that

1. The grapevine helps the new employee become socialized into his work environment and is a valuable source of information for satisfying some needs of longer-term employees.

2. The grapevine is more visible at the lower levels of the managerial hierarchy where supervisors can readily feel its impact.

¹⁰⁹Newstrom, p. 16.

3. The grapevine is viewed as less influential by persons who work in small groups (1-49 people). It is possible that communication channels are so informal in these mini-organizations that employees cannot differentiate between the formal and informal, and hence conclude the grapevine is hardly present at all.

4. The grapevine is viewed as more valuable by smaller units of an organization. It appears that most things get accomplished in smaller organizations via informal communications, and consequently the grapevine is perceived as an integral, valuable network that contributes toward organizational effectiveness.¹¹⁰

In discussing the impact on the manager of employees' attitudes toward their grapevines, Newstrom, Monczka and Reif noted that the manager has an obligation to investigate the nature of employee attitudes toward their grapevine. If employees have a negative attitude toward their grapevine, the manager should be sensitive to the probably detrimental impact of the grapevine on employee need satisfaction. On the other hand, if employees have very high regards for the grapevine, the manager should examine the formal communication system to determine whether it has failed to accomplish its full objectives.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 18-19.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 20.

Key Communicators of Informal Communication Systems

Davis (1953) found that the role of the manager is affected by his position in the chain of command and his position in the chain of procedure, which involves the sequence of work performance and cuts across chains of command.¹¹² The position of the manager may affect the role and/or the position of the key communicator of the grapevine.

Based on his 1964 study, Davis wrote that the grapevine exists largely by word of mouth and by observation.¹¹³ Procedures which regularly bring people into contact will encourage them to be active on the grapevine. "As long as each manager does not type, carry out the boss's orders or plan things for others to do totally by himself, management cannot stop the informal network."¹¹⁴

The communication of facts is more effective if it comes from a source which employees think is in a position to know the true facts. The source should be a person who is dependable and believable in terms of his past communication record.¹¹⁵ Walton's study, for example, found that the effectiveness of any pronouncement is determined as much

¹¹²Davis, "Management Communications", p. 47.

¹¹³Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 226.

¹¹⁴Kennedy, p. 51.

¹¹⁵Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 230.

by who said it as by what is said.¹¹⁶

Dependable informal leaders can help management stop a rumor if the true facts are shared with them as soon as possible. Davis' findings (1953) suggested that informal leaders on the grapevine act in a predictable manner. If the information possessed by the individual concerns a job function he is interested in, he is likely to tell others. If his information is about a social associate, he is likely to tell others. And, the sooner he knows of an event after it happened, the more likely he is to tell others.¹¹⁷

Participation also helps prevent and reduce rumors because it gives members some part in determining the things which affect them.¹¹⁸ After identifying the key communicators along the informal network, the manager should send out the facts to as many people by as many media as possible and in a consistent fashion, so that there is little room for misinterpretation of the information.

Informal communication systems are people systems. People in the organization determine what will be communicated and to whom. The people most likely to be tuned into the communication grapevine, according to Wendel, are likely

¹¹⁶Eugene Walton, "Communicating Down the Line: How They Really Get the Word," Personnel 36 (July August 1959), p. 81.

¹¹⁷Davis, "Management Communication," p. 46.

¹¹⁸Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 226.

to be the more clever ones in the organization.¹¹⁹

Several studies suggested that the key communicators on the grapevine of the organization are the managers themselves. Managers, Danner asserted, are in a strategic position in communication channels because they can transmit, filter, or block two-way communication between higher management and lower level employees.¹²⁰

Walton's study found that a substantial number of employees from all job classifications and from all grade and seniority levels placed a high reliance on the manager to provide information informally.¹²¹ Walton concluded that employees think of their managers as being generally well informed and thus naturally look to them for information. Employees found the managers to be the most effective communication channel because it was "official, the real scoop, not just somebody's opinions or speculations."¹²²

Saltonstall made the following observations about the role of middle managers in the communication chain. The manager functions as the switchboard of the communication system. He filters employee attitudes and information to

¹¹⁹Wendel, p. 33.

¹²⁰Jack Danner, "Don't Let the Grapevine Trip You Up," Supervisory Management 17(November 1972), p. 3.

¹²¹Walton, "Communicating," p. 79.

¹²²Ibid., p. 80.

upper management and management policies, instructions, etc. filter through him down to employees. It is in the behavior of the manager towards his people that the worker determines the sincerity of management's message. The sensitive manager senses that it is up to him to sparkplug the upward communication of the opinions and attitudes of employees by listening and showing his personal interest. In this way, he builds employee understanding and loyalty.¹²³

Berner¹²⁴ and Ross¹²⁵ conducted similar studies which supported the finding that the higher people were in the organizational hierarchy, the more likely they were to be key communicators on the grapevines of their organizations. Berner and Ross studied the informal communication patterns in high schools and elementary schools respectively. They found that because of his formal position in the school, the administrator was in a position to know more in general about all activities of the school than any one else. In this position, the administrator

¹²³Robert Saltonstall, Human Relations in Administration (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959), pp. 359-360.

¹²⁴Marshall K. Berner, "Development of Procedures and Techniques for the Analysis of the Relationships Between Formal Organization of High School Systems and the Informal Communication Structures Within These Systems," (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1957), p. 155.

¹²⁵George E. Ross, "A Study of Informal Communication Patterns in Two Elementary Schools," (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1960), p. 147.

served as an agent of interrelating the various activities to his staff members. The administrator also had the responsibility for the provision of time and places for his staff to establish interpersonal contacts on an informal basis. By such actions, the administrator facilitated the functioning of interpersonal contacts which could re-enforce the operation of the formal and informal organizations.

Davis' study (1953) provided mixed results on the topic of key communicators. Davis found no evidence that any one group consistently acted as key communicators. Instead, he found that different types of information passed through different key communicators. On the other hand, Davis found that the higher-level members of the organization initiated more communications than the lower-level members¹²⁶ These studies agreed that the higher a person was in the formal hierarchical structure of the organization, the more likely it was that he initiated informal communications to others.

On the other hand, Griffiths¹²⁷ insisted that it is virtually impossible for a principal to be a leader in the informal organization. The formal position of the principal in the chain-of-command makes it virtually impossible to

¹²⁶Davis, "Management Communication," p. 46.

¹²⁷Griffiths, Organizing Schools, pp. 269-270.

satisfy the requirements of his job and at the same time serve as informal leader of his teachers. Griffiths foresaw instances where as an informal leader the principal might become involved in a movement to reverse the power pattern of the school district.

Griffiths continued that the office of principal requires the administrator to treat his subordinates as equally as possible. The principal cannot afford to have himself identified with, let alone consistently align himself with, any one group. Griffiths concluded that sometimes the formal organization is the only protection that the individual has against the sanctions of the informal group. What protection does the individual have if the representative of the formal organization is controlled by the norms of a clique within the school?¹²⁸

Kennedy claimed that the most valuable contacts for a manager to have on the informal communication system were secretaries, the competitors of the organization, and peers within the manager's own organization. Superiors might have been included in the network, but Kennedy stated that it is harder to trade tidbits with someone who has direct power over the manager.¹²⁹

Secretaries are strategically located as communication centers, and they are often the most likely to initiate

¹²⁸Ibid., pp. 270-271.

¹²⁹Kennedy, p. 52.

messages with the grapevine network.¹³⁰ Secretaries often have the inside story on change. They communicate so effectively at a nonverbal level. It is not difficult to put together the behavior of the secretary, the nature of the job of her boss, and the information in circulation to discover what may be happening. The manager may depend on his secretary to take the pulse of the organization. The secretary, in turn, may be a pipeline to the top. Almost all secretaries can be important allies and sources of information if they choose to be. Even secretaries who treat everything as confidential can help by giving hints and nonverbal clues. If not an ally, the secretary can be a powerful enemy. A secretary can put information into the grapevine over her boss's name, and by the time the boss gets into the situation and denies it, the damage may have already been done.¹³¹

The peers of the manager within the organization are important sources of information provided that the manager analyzes what is not said as well as what is said. That is, if the manager receives information from the secretarial vine and hears an approximation from other sources, but hears nothing from his peers, the manager has learned that his peers are not talking. A sign of trouble is the drying up of the managers' internal sources of information. The

¹³⁰Mandel and Hellweg, p. 52.

¹³¹Kennedy, p. 53.

manager is isolated. The only news the manager gets is written and has been given to everyone else as well.¹³²

The findings of the studies of Knippen and Davis augmented Kennedy's conclusions. Knippen reported that, in his study, managers first received about half of their information from other managers and half from sources outside the organization.¹³³ Davis also found that the predominant flow of information for managers for events of general interest was cross-functional. That is, information was transmitted by managers to peers in other areas of the organization, rather than to employees within the area of the manager. Davis concluded that imparting information to peers outside his own area served to make a man feel that the others would consider him "in the know".¹³⁴

Mandel and Hellweg contended that information flows horizontally. That is, individuals spread information to others who occupy the same working level in the organization. Thus, the study of Mandel and Hellweg suggested that managers communicate information to other managers, administrators to other administrators, etc.¹³⁵

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Jay T. Knippen, "Grapevine Communication: Management and Employees," Journal of Business Research 2 (January 1974), p. 51.

¹³⁴Davis, "Management Communication", p. 47.

¹³⁵Mandel and Hellweg, p. 52.

Identifying and using key communicators allows people to know that they have an important role in the schools. And using them usually causes the key communicators to give school officials the benefit of the doubt if a problem arises--especially if those officials have been honest all the time.¹³⁶

Criticisms of Informal Communication Systems

Some people use the word "grapevine" improperly as a synonym of the word "rumormongering". In fact, rumors are that part of the grapevine which have no factual basis. Several authors have commented on the negative connotations associated with the word "grapevine".

Simon stated that the chief disadvantages of informal communication systems are that they discourage frankness, since confidential remarks may be spread about, and that the information transmitted by the grapevine is often inaccurate.¹³⁷ Mandel and Hellweg agreed with Simon's assesment of the deficiencies of the grapevine. Mandel and Hellweg stated that information which is "leaked" by way of the grapevine is inaccurate and may cause morale problems which, in severe cases, may even cause organization dysfunction.¹³⁸

¹³⁶Bagin, p. 53.

¹³⁷Simon, "Informal Communication," p. 402.

¹³⁸Mandel and Hellweg, p. 52.

There was other research, however, which found that the information transmitted on the grapevine was accurate. Walton¹³⁹ found that in normal work situations 80 percent of grapevine information is accurate. Davis' research disclosed an accuracy of 80 to 90 percent for noncontroversial company information. Davis conceded that accuracy is not so great for personal or highly emotional information. Davis continued that people think that the grapevine is less accurate than it really is because its errors are more dramatic than its routine accuracy. Moreover, the inaccurate parts are often more important. Also, grapevine information is usually incomplete, so it may be misinterpreted even though the details it does carry are accurate.¹⁴⁰

The most undesirable feature of the grapevine, and the one which gives the grapevine in general a bad reputation is rumor. Although the word "rumor" is sometimes used synonymously with the word "grapevine", "rumor" is grapevine information which is transmitted without factual evidence to support it; it is the injudicious and untrue part of the grapevine. Generally, rumors are incorrect. Rumors are stopped or weakened by transmitting the facts using any media possible.

¹³⁹Eugene Walton, "How Efficient is the Grapevine?," Personnel (March-April 1961), p. 48.

¹⁴⁰Davis, Human Behavior at Work, p. 224.

Ambiguous rumors will spread more than will clear and specific messages, according to Mandel and Hellweg. Rumormongering occurs because ambiguous messages are more difficult to test against reality for accuracy. If the facts are known, a rumor can be checked against the facts and will probably be terminated quickly if it is found to be spurious. Mandel and Hellweg stated that one of the major problems with rumors transmitted over a grapevine is the distortion of the original message.¹⁴¹ The distortion in most situations is unintentional, but merely a factor of human communication and belief.

Danner wrote that an organization will wind up with the kind of grapevine it deserves. The vulnerability of any group to rumors is in direct proportion to the strength of the leadership of that group.¹⁴²

Summary

The informal communication system can be viewed as having various favorable aspects. The system can give a supervisor insight into the attitudes of employees. It is also a safety valve for employees' emotions. "This cathartic value of 'blowing off steam' frequently alleviates employee problems or prevents them from growing larger."¹⁴³ Another

¹⁴¹Mandel and Hellweg, p. 52.

¹⁴²Danner, p. 6.

¹⁴³Huneryager and Heckman, p. 513.

important function the grapevine serves is to help spread useful information. It can, for example, interpret formal orders of management into the language of the workers, in this way making up for the failure of management to give workers understandable messages. The informal system might even carry information which the formal system does not wish to carry and purposely leaves unsaid. Another grapevine quality is its fast pace. Being flexible and personal, it spreads information faster than most management communication systems operate. Another grapevine characteristic is its skill at cracking even the tightest company security screen.

Davis stated that the grapevine is influential, either favorable or unfavorably.¹⁴⁴ Managers should realize that they need to learn its habits and seek to guide it. Managers must intergrate the grapevine interests with those of the formal organization. The first step toward integrating the grapveine is to listen to it. Without a grapevine the ability of the manager to build teamwork, motivate his people, and create identification with the organization would be severely restricted.¹⁴⁵

Summary of Chapter II

The review of the literature led to a grouping of

¹⁴⁴ Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 251.

¹⁴⁵ Davis, "Use of the Office Grapevine," p. 187.

variables descriptive of a relationship which might exist between certain leadership behaviors of principals and selected aspects of informal communication systems.

The review of various theories presented in the review of the literature led to the selection of the Situational Leadership Theory of Hersey and Blanchard, a most recent analysis of leadership behavior, as the conceptual framework for this study. Situational Leadership Theory separates the various interactive phenomena associated with leadership behavior into four leadership behavior quadrants. Each quadrant is descriptive of the style of leadership the managers should adopt depending on his personality, the situation, and the maturity level of his group.

The review of the literature concerning informal organizations and their communication systems identified aspects of informal communication systems which might prove useful for the manager to understand and possibly control. These aspects were: levels of activity on informal communication systems, uses of informal communication systems by managers, attitudes of managers towards informal communication systems, and the position of the key communicators on informal communication systems.

The challenge for managers is to seek out and adopt management styles which encompass mechanisms for selecting those processes of informal communication systems which are

viable and dynamic techniques for accomplishing the goals of the organization. Assessment of the interactions between leadership behavior of managers and their informal communication systems should assist in the development of a conceptualization which might prove useful in assisting managers to meet the goals and objectives of their organizations.

CHAPTER III

THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Ascertaining the relationship between the leadership behavior of elementary school principals and the manner in which their informal communication systems function may yield useful information which would allow the leader to operate more effectively to meet organizational demands and individual needs within the school. To this end, this chapter of the investigation discusses and includes those methods and procedures utilized to accomplish the purpose of this study. Included in this chapter are descriptions of the following: population, instrumentation, procedures, treatment of the data, and hypotheses of the study.

Since the questions posed in Chapter I specified the relationship between the abstract concepts of leadership behavior and informal communication which are difficult to test directly, specific indicants were selected to test the relationship between them. A bureaucracy such as a school organization normally prescribes formal channels of communication which flow through the office of principal. By being present in a school, the principal has access to information transmitted informally. Thus, the principal is in a crucial position to assess the interaction between the

formal and informal channels of communication within his school. Thus, the assessment of the principal of his informal communication system was chosen as an indicant of the concept of informal communication. To confirm the data gathered from principals on informal communication systems, data were also gathered from principal-selected key communicators.

Likewise, primary data on leadership behavior were obtained from impressions gathered from the principals themselves and from principal-selected key communicators. The basic premise underlying this method is that "group members more than anyone else can describe the properties of their own group."¹

Population

The area from which the population of this study was drawn was south Cook County, Illinois. The Educational Service Region of Cook County defines south Cook County as being bounded by the city of Chicago on the north, the state of Indiana on the east, the county of Will on the south and Harlem Avenue on the west. The school districts of south Cook County are found in the various types of suburbs which surround a large metropolitan city. Of the 201 suburbs which surround Chicago, south Cook County contains communi-

¹Carl H. Rush, Jr., "Group Dimensions of Aircrews," (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1953) , p. 12.

ties which range from the fourth ranked suburb of Olympia Fields to the 201st, Robbins.² These rankings were based on median family income, percent of families with incomes over \$25,000 and median home value. Table 4 includes these three socioeconomic indices for the suburbs just mentioned.³

	Median Family Income	% of Families With Incomes Over \$25,000	Median Home Value
Olympia Fields	\$41,120	95.3%	\$75,000
Robbins	\$13,630	6.4%	\$18,500
All suburbs in south Cook County	\$21,580	30.5%	\$41,400

Table 4
Socioeconomic Indices of Selected Suburbs

Of the suburbs in this area, fourteen out of thirty-nine have a black population of 400 or more. The black population of these fourteen suburbs ranges from 3.6 to 97.7 percent with a mean of 40.1 percent. The remaining twenty-five suburbs in south Cook County remain all-white or nearly all-white.⁴

²Chicago Regional Hospital Study, "The Socioeconomic Rank of Chicago's Suburban Municipalities in 1977," (University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, College of Urban Sciences, (1977), pp. 5,10.

³Ibid., pp. 5-10.

⁴Pierre de Vise, "Racial Steering and a Community's Right to Remain Integrated," (University of Illinois Chicago Circle, School of Urban Sciences, 1980), p. 33.

Operating expenses of Cook County school districts ranged from \$1,478.15 to \$2,758.55 per student. The average operating expense per student in south Cook County was \$1,775.11, while the average operating expense per student in Cook County (excluding Chicago) was \$2,030.10.⁵

The population of this study consisted of the current elementary principals in south Cook County. In order to obviate the variable of school enrollment, the principals in the population were divided into two categories. The main population of this study consisted of the elementary principals whose school enrollment lies between 201-500 students. Where possible, data gathered from these principals were utilized in the analysis of the data gathered for this study. The secondary population consisted of elementary principals whose school enrollment lies between 101-200 or 501-700 students. Seventy-seven percent of the elementary schools in the target population have enrollments between 201-500 students. The main population together with the secondary population comprises ninety-eight percent of the schools in south Cook County.⁶

Table 5 indicates the numerical distribution according to school enrollment of the principals in the target

⁵Research Report: Cook County Operating Expenses 1978-79, Educational Service Region of Cook County.

⁶1980 Directory of Suburban Public Schools, Educational Region of Cook County.

population.

101-200	15
201-500	116
501-700	20

Table 5
Distribution of Target Population
According to School Enrollment

Instrumentation

The data necessary to investigate the questions posed by this study were obtained through use of the following instruments: (1) the LEAD-self Questionnaire (Appendix A), (2) the LEAD-other Questionnaire, (3) "Informal Communication in Organizations" (Appendix B), and the interview instruments, (4) "Assessing Informal Communication Systems--Principal's Form" (Appendix C) and (5) "Assessing Informal Communication systems--Key Communicator's Form (Appendix D). Each of these instruments is described below.

1. The LEAD instrument developed by Hersey and Blanchard is a standardized questionnaire which was designed to measure leader behavior.

The LEAD-self questionnaire presents twelve situations which include:

- a. Three situations involving groups of low maturity (M1)
- b. Three situations involving groups of low-to-

moderate maturity (M2)

c. Three situations involving groups of moderate-to-high maturity (M3)

d. Three situations involving groups of high maturity (M4)

Each situation on the LEAD-self questionnaire presents a choice among four alternative leader behaviors--a high task/low relationship behavior, a high task/high relationship behavior, a high relationship/low task behavior, and a low relationship/low task behavior.

The LEAD-self questionnaire yielded scores which indicated how principals viewed themselves in terms of their leadership style which was measured along the dimensions of task behavior and relationship behavior.

The basic leadership style of a principal is defined by Hersey and Blanchard as the style or styles for which the principal had the most responses.⁷ Thus, after the LEAD-self is scored, a principal can be placed into one of the four quadrants of The Situational Leadership grid (Figure 5) on the basis of the responses of the principal to the LEAD-self. The principals in each quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid have been shown to display characteristics which are summarized below.⁸

⁷Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, Management of Organizational Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977), p. 232.

⁸Ibid., pp. 257-271.

Table 6
Leadership Characteristics

Quadrant I
High Task/Low Relationship

The leader provides the directive leadership group productivity in the short run.

Although the leader maintains some structure and direction, socioemotional support and group responsibility are gradually increased by moderate involvement in decision-making. If the group handles this involvement well, further increases in socioemotional support become more appropriate.

The leader provides the directive leadership if it becomes necessary to unfreeze the group to accomplish its goals.

Quadrant II
High Task/High Relationship

While the leader keeps the channels of communication open, he maintains structure by seeing that standards are met.

The leader attempts to satisfy the needs of the group for setting goals and organizing work, but also provides high levels of socioemotional support.

The leader maintains some structure by seeing that members are aware of their responsibilities and expected standards of performance; appropriate behavior is positively reinforced by the leader by friendly interaction with the group.

Quadrant III
High Relationship/Low Task

While communication channels are kept open some structure is provided by bringing the group together and focusing on increasing productivity.

The leader has implicit trust in people and is primarily concerned with facilitating group goal accomplishment.

The leader allows the group to derive its own solutions to problems, but does not turn responsibility over to members completely. The leader makes himself available to act as facilitator or play some role in the decision-making process if necessary.

Quadrant IV
Low Task/Low Relationship

The leader maximizes the involvement of mature group in developing and implementing plans to increase group productivity in the long run.

The leader allows the group to provide its own structure and socioemotional support.

The leader allows the group to derive its own solution to the problem and maintain independence.

2. The LEAD-other questionnaire is the same instrument as the LEAD-self, but written so that the significant others of the leader can fill it out on the behavior of the leader. This questionnaire reflects the views of the leader by his subordinates, superior(s) and/or peers or associates. The LEAD-other provided data which indicated how consistent the leader's view of his own leadership style is with how his behavior is viewed by others. Hersey and Blanchard have found that the closer to reality a leader's view of himself is to the view of others, the higher the probability that the leader will be able to cope effectively with his environment.

Thus, although LEAD-self scores are interesting in themselves, combined with LEAD-other scores, they become powerful data that can have a significant impact on the leader and the individual or group he or she is attempting to lead. 9

3. The questionnaire, "Informal Communication in Organizations" was designed to assess selected aspects of informal communication in organizations and aspects of interpersonal relations thought to influence organizational communication. This questionnaire was adapted from an instrument developed by Karlene Roberts and Charles O'Reilly III.¹⁰

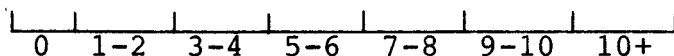
⁹ Ibid., p. 271.

¹⁰ Karlene Roberts and Charles O'Reilly III, "Measuring Organizational Communication," Journal of Applied Psychology 59 (1974), pp. 321-326.

Among the communication aspects assessed in this instrument were desire for interaction with others in the organization, directionality of information flow--upward, downward, and lateral, perceived accuracy of information received, feelings of overload, feelings of underload, degree to which information is withheld, the degree of redundancy in information transmission, the degree to which information is perceived to be expanded in transmission, the degree to which the face-to-face technique and telephones are used in communicating information and overall satisfaction with communication in the organization. These aspects were felt to be components of informal communication which could be measured on the seven-space scale utilized in the questionnaire. Most items on the questionnaire, "Informal Communication in Organizations," were scored on a seven-space continuum.

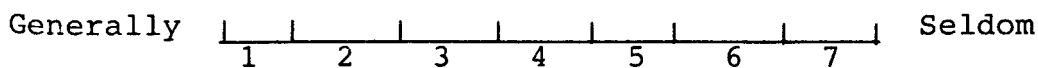
Example: Question 5

In a typical week, about how many times do you have less than an adequate amount of information for making the best possible work-related decisions?



Question 15

Do you view the informal communication system as a legitimate means of communication?



Each principal then indicated the degree of his

cognitive belief by the placement of a response on the seven-space scale. The principals were instructed to indicate on the scale by a check mark for each variable how they reacted to each particular item.

Each item, with a seven-space scale, was treated as a continuous variable from the extreme at one end to that at the other. Tally worksheets were used to record directly the responses from the questionnaires of respondents. Results were divided into four groups, namely, those principals whose responses to the LEAD-self placed them into Quadrants I, II, III, and IV of the Situational Leadership grid of Hersey and Blanchard. The means of the responses was then found for each item. Items which pertained to the same variable were grouped together for the purposes of analysis.

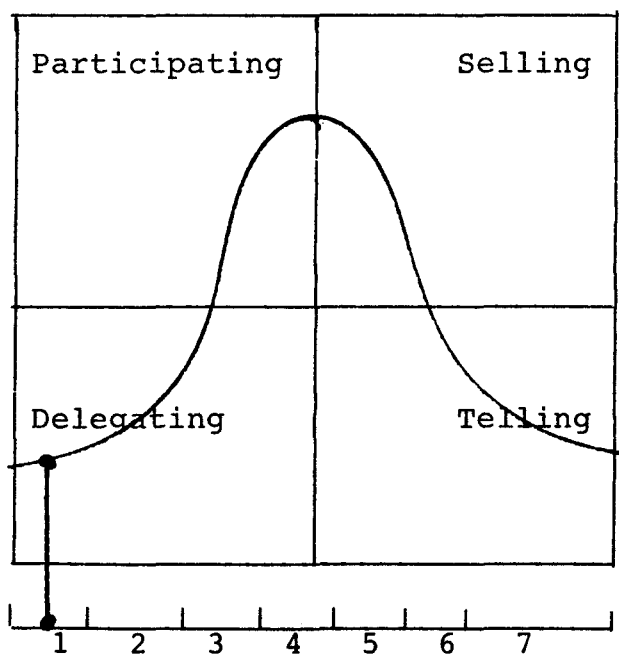


Figure 6
Comparison of Situational Leadership Grid
With Seven-Space Scale

Depicted graphically, the comparison of leadership behavior to mean responses might appear as in Figure 6.

For instance, it was expected that the means of the responses of principals whose leadership behavior placed them into the delegating quadrant would fall into the corresponding position on the seven-space continuum. Thus a situation such as Figure 7 would be an anomaly.

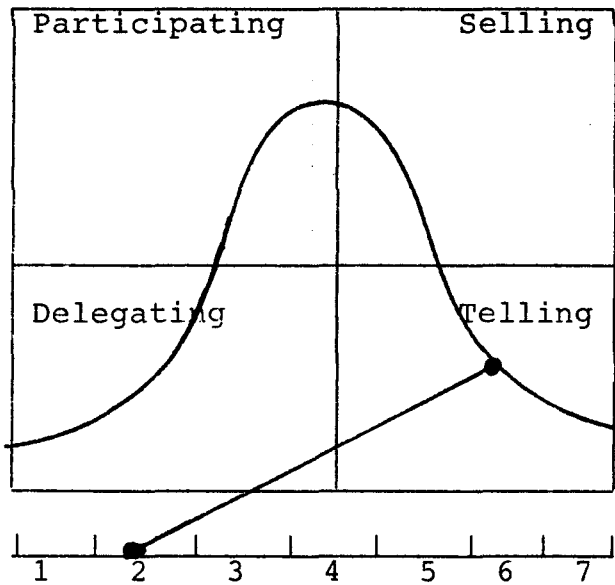


Figure 7
An Anomaly

An example of the other type of item found on the questionnaire "Informal Communication in Organizations" follows:

Of all the time you spend receiving information on an informal basis at work, about what percentage comes from:
(total=100%)

immediate superiors _____ % subordinates _____ %
peers-others at your job level _____ %

These items requested that the respondents answer in percent-

tages that totalled 100%.

Lastly, the questionnaire asked principals to identify the title or position of the person they considered to be the key communicator of their informal communication systems. The purpose of this question was to identify the key communicator of each respondent to lay a foundation for interviewing this person in the next phase of the study.

The questionnaire, "Informal Communication in Organizations" was concerned with assessing both the cognitive and affective domain of the behaviors of principals towards informal communication systems.

4. The interview instruments, "Assessing Informal Communication Systems (Principal's Interview)" and "Assessing Informal Communication Systems (Key Communicator's Interview)" were used to assess the beliefs and attitudes of principals and their key communicators and to assess the rationale for the actions of principals towards their informal communication systems. The interview instruments dealt primarily with the affective domain.

The interview was the open-form or unrestricted type of research tool. According to Best, "The open form probably provides for greater depth of response. The respondent reveals his frame of reference and possibly the reasons for his responses."¹¹

¹¹John W. Best, Research in Education (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 163.

In discussing the interview technique, Best contended that people are usually more willing to talk than to commit to something in writing. It is also possible to seek the same information, in several ways, at various stages of the interview, thus providing a check on the truthfulness of the responses, Best continued,

Through the interview technique, the researcher may stimulate the subject to greater insight into his own experiences, and thereby explore significant areas not anticipated in the original plan of investigation. ¹²

In other words, the interview allowed those principals participating in this phase of the study a greater opportunity to explain, expand and expatiate on their experiences with informal communication systems than was possible by sole use of the questionnaire. A major focus of the interviews was on the topic of key communicators. Also, the interviews were used to probe further into the uses the principals make of their informal communication systems. Since the key communicator was not administered a written questionnaire concerning informal communication systems, the interview questions for key communicators covered much of the content of the written questionnaires administered to the principals in addition to similar questions asked of the principals during their interviews.

Procedures

1. The target population consisted of the current

¹²Ibid., pp. 186-187.

elementary principals in south Cook County, Illinois.

2. In March, 1981, 116 copies of the LEAD-self of Hersey and Blanchard were mailed to principals in the main population and 35 copies to principals in the secondary population. Included was also a letter of inquiry requesting principals' participation in the study. During follow-up procedures, such as reminder postcards and telephone calls, it was discovered that several schools had either been closed or consolidated under one principal. As a result, there were ten fewer elementary school principals in south Cook County. Of the 141 questionnaires, 124 (87%) were returned; 97 questionnaires were returned by principals in the main population, while 27 were returned from principals in the secondary population. A code number was assigned each principal to insure anonymity.

3. Based upon the results of the LEAD instrument, each principal was placed into the appropriate leadership behavior quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid of Hersey and Blanchard. (Figure 5) The leadership behavior of the principal is in the quadrant where he made the most responses. Figure 8 presents the numerical distribution of the population into the quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid of Hersey and Blanchard. It was necessary to include data from the secondary population because the main population did not provide a sufficient number of cooperative principals to attain the predetermined sample size.

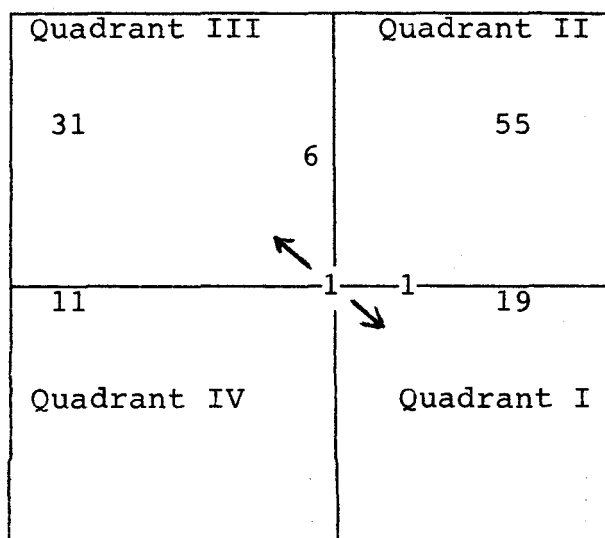


Figure 8
Placement of Target Population Into
Situational Leadership Grid

The numbers placed on the axes of the grid indicate that the responses of these principals placed them in a tie in these quadrants.

The results of this phase of the study are consistent with the results reported by Hersey and Blanchard who found that the majority of people who complete the LEAD-self place in either quadrants 2 or 3 (styles 2 or 3). Hersey and Blanchard contend that this placement occurs because styles 2 or 3 are "safe" styles. This means that these style choices are never that far away from the appropriate intervention. Also, although the LEAD-self is designed to give the respondent opportunities to make decisions on all levels of maturity, in the actual job assignment, the respondent, in all probability, deals with only one or two levels of maturity in his work group. On the other hand, styles 1 and

4 are risky styles because if they are used inappropriately, they can result in a great deal of crisis.¹³

4. Questionnaire II, "Informal Communication in Organizations" and the interview instrument, "Assessing Informal Communication Systems", were validated with participation from principals of elementary schools similar to those included in the study. This resulted in appropriate modification based upon the responses of principals to the questions and their interpretation as to the meaning of terms being used, as well as directions that were included.

5. Using a table of random numbers, ten principals from each quadrant were randomly selected to achieve a sample for further study. Thus, forty principals comprised this sample. Principals were selected from the main population in Quadrant I, II, and III. In order to complete the sample for Quadrant IV, it was necessary to include principals from the secondary population. In April, 1981, Questionnaire II, "Informal Communication in Organizations", was mailed to those principals who comprised this sample of the study. Accompanying the questionnaire was a letter of inquiry asking the principals further participation in the study.

6. Using a table of random numbers, four out of ten principals from each leadership behavior quadrant were

¹³Hersey and Blanchard, Management, p. 249.

randomly selected from those principals who answered Questionnaire II to achieve the sample for further study. Interviews were conducted during May and June of 1981 with the sixteen selected principals. The interview instrument, "Assessing Informal Communication systems" was administered.

7. The sixteen principals who comprise the sample for the interviews were asked in a letter of inquiry to have their key communicators, identified in Questionnaire II, available for an interview. In a separate session from the principal, the key communicator was asked to complete the LEAD-other instrument of Hersey and Blanchard. In order to determine the degree of association between the results of the LEAD-self completed by the sixteen principals who comprised the interview sample and the results of the LEAD-other completed by the corresponding principal-selected key communicators, lambda (λ) the coefficient of predictability was employed. Lambda is an index of the reduction in error of predicting one variable from another.¹⁴ In comparing the results generated from the respondents, a lambda = .91 was obtained indicating a high degree of association between the LEAD-selves and the LEAD-others completed by the respondents in this study.

¹⁴Dean J. Champion, Basic Statistics for Social Research (Chandler Publishing Company, 1970), p. 211.

After the administration of the LEAD-other, the key communicators were interviewed using the instrument, "Assessing Informal Communication-- Key Communicator's Form".

Hypotheses

The review of the related literature provided the basis for the statement of formal hypotheses. The formulation of null hypotheses concerns a judgement that any apparent differences found between the experimental group and the control group as a result of the investigation merely resulted from sampling error.¹⁵ In terms of this study, null hypotheses were formulated on the assumption, after the analysis of the data, that any differences found between the responses of principals in each quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid of Hersey and Blanchard were due to differences resulting from sampling error. Since the hypotheses are stated in parallel form, only the first hypothesis with its ancillary hypotheses are stated. The remainder of the ancillary hypotheses can be stated in like manner.

1. There is no significant relationship between the placement of principals in the quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid of Hersey and Blanchard and the level of activity of the informal communication systems of these principals.

¹⁵Best, p. 270.

- a. The means of the responses of high task/low relationship principals (as measured by the LEAD-self) to items concerning the level of activity of their informal communication systems (as measured by the instrument "Informal Communication in Organizations") will not be higher than the means of the responses of high task/high relationship principals, high relationship/low task principals, and low relationship/low task principals.
- b. The means of the responses of high task/high relationship principals to items concerning the level of activity of their informal communication systems will not be lower than the means of the responses of high task/low relationship principals, nor higher than the means of the responses of high relationship/low task principals and low relationship/low task principals.
- c. The means of the responses of high relationship/low task principals to items concerning the level of activity of their informal communication systems will not be lower than the means of the responses of high task/low relationship principals and high task/high relationship principals, nor higher than the means of the responses of low relationship/low task principals.

d. The means of the responses of low relationship/low task principals to items concerning the level of activity of their informal communication systems will not be lower than the means of the responses of high task/low relationship principals, high task/high relationship principals and high relationship/low task principals.

2. There is no significant relationship between the placement of principals in the quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid of Hersey and Blanchard and the uses by these principals of their informal communication systems.

3. There is no significant relationship between the placement of principals in the quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid of Hersey and Blanchard and the attitudes of these principals toward their informal communication systems.

4. There is no significant relationship between the placement of principals in the quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid of Hersey and Blanchard and the position held by the key communicators of the informal communication systems of these principals.

Data Treatment

In order to determine whether the quantifiable data gathered from the participants in this study were significant at the .05 level of significance, the following treat-

ments were employed:¹⁶

For data reported in percentages, the chi square (χ^2) goodness-of-fit statistic was used as the statistical evaluation of the difference between the observations obtained in this study and what results might have been expected by chance. For data reported on continuums, the mean responses of the principals in each quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid were calculated. In order to determine the significance of any differences among the four sample means simultaneously, the analysis of variance test (ANOVA) was employed. Through the use of the within and between group variances, an F-ratio was computed as the technique for assessment of significant differences between the mean scores of the respondents. If a significant difference exists at the .05 level of significance, it is apparent that at least two extreme means (the smallest and the largest) will be different from one another significantly. By utilizing the Newman-Keuls procedure, it is possible to determine specifically where the significant differences between the mean responses of principals in the four quadrants lie.

In analyzing the data obtained from the interviews of the principals and their corresponding key communicators, the constant comparative method of qualitative analysis was

¹⁶Champion, pp. 115,154.

employed.¹⁷ Each incident gleaned from the interviews was coded according to its appropriate hypothesis and according to the quadrant in which the respondent was placed. While coding an incident for an hypothesis, the incident was compared with the previous incidents coded for the same hypothesis. This constant comparison of the incidents generated properties identifiable in each of the four quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid. Modifications of incidents were made mainly for the purpose of logical clarity--paring off non-relevant properties and integrating details of properties into a narrative.

Summary

Chapter III described the design which was developed to study the problem posed in this investigation. The participants in this study consisted of 124 elementary school principals in south Cook County, Illinois. Each participant completed the LEAD-self of Hersey and Blanchard, a standardized questionnaire designed to assess the view of the principal concerning his leadership behavior. Each principal was placed into the appropriate quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid. Ten principals from each quadrant were then randomly selected to complete the questionnaire "Informal Communication in Organizations"

¹⁷Barney G. Glaser, "The Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis," Social Forces (1965), pp. 440-441.

which assessed the view of the respondent concerning informal communication systems in his organization. From this sample, four principals from each quadrant were randomly selected to provide the sample of principals to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted in order to confirm and complete the information gathered through the written instruments. In separate sessions, principal-selected key communicators completed the LEAD-other and were then interviewed.

The data were analyzed through the use of various statistical treatments, primarily consisting of analysis of variance. Chapter IV will discuss the results of the data analysis and provide answers to the basic questions and hypotheses presented in this study.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The basic question for this study served as a guideline in the formation of greater insights into the relationship between the leadership behavior of elementary school principals and the manner in which their informal communication systems function. To this end, four propositions were advanced to aid in the investigation of the relationship between the leadership behavior of elementary principals and: first, the level of activity on the informal communication systems of these principals; second, the uses of the informal communication systems by these principals; third, the attitudes of these principals towards their informal communication system; and fourth, the position held by the key communicators of the informal communication systems of these principals.

Chapter IV sets forth an analysis of data gathered as a means of answering the basic question with its four attendant categories. A series of hypotheses, related to the basic question, was developed to assist in the analysis of data as well as to provide a means of drawing relationships between the variables utilized in the study.

Chapter IV is divided into sections corresponding to each of the four null hypotheses. This chapter reviews the compiled data of the sample group for each of these four null hypotheses and in the context of the Situational Leadership Theory of Hersey and Blanchard. Thus, the analysis of the quantitative data which relates to a particular hypothesis is included in the section containing that particular hypothesis. The analysis of the quantitative data consists of the analysis of the items of the questionnaire "Informal Communication in Organizations." The subsection containing the quantitative analysis is followed by the subsection containing the qualitative analysis for each particular hypothesis. The qualitative analysis contains the narrative analysis of items found on the interview instruments, "Assessing Informal Communication." Pertinent data, which applied to a particular hypothesis, were analyzed and intergrated into the narrative. Natural language statements from the interviews were also integrated into the narrative. Appropriate tables and figures with reference to the various hypotheses were utilized throughout this phase of the study.

Figure 9 is a Venn Diagram of the informal communication system of a school district. Although the major concern of this study is the informal communication system of the principal, it is interrelated and effected by other communication systems found in the district. There-

fore, where appropriate, data relevant to these other systems will also be presented.

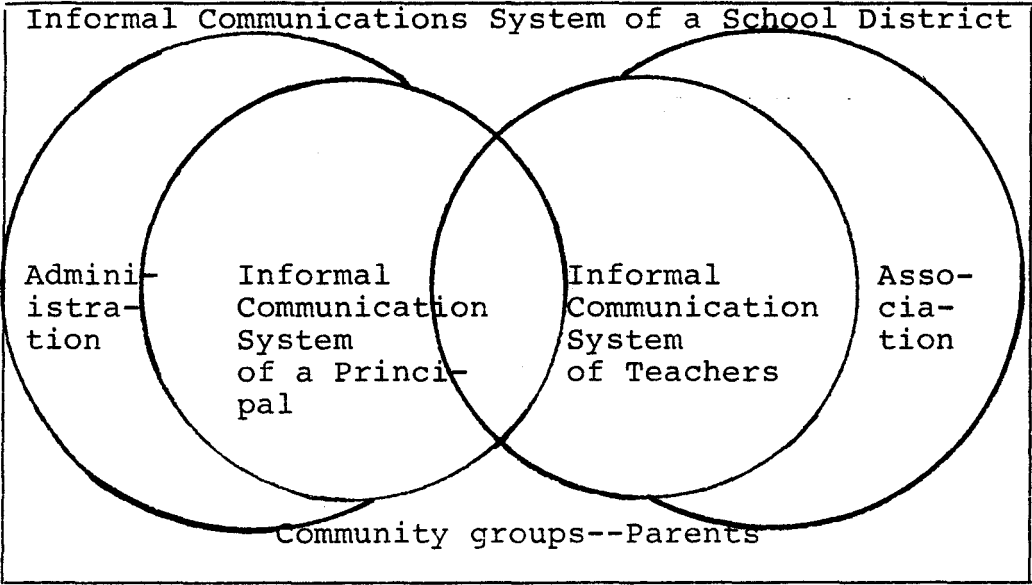


Figure 9
Informal Communication System of a School District

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between the placement of the principals in the quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid of Hersey and Blanchard and the level of activity of the informal communication systems of these principals.

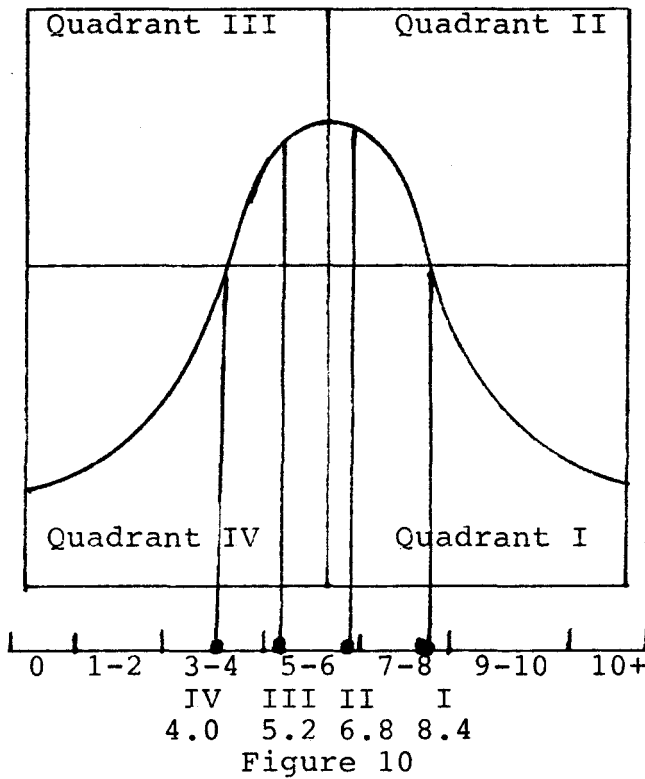
The level of activity of the informal communication system of a school district is a measure of the climate of the organization--the cohesiveness, vivacity and stability of the organization. The informal communication system assists in the satisfaction of the need of organizational members for social interaction. An indication of how well the organization satisfies this need for social interaction is the level of activity on the grapevine. Another indication provided by the level of activity on a grapevine is how well the organization keeps its members informed on those issues which members believe concern them. The level of grapevine activity can provide evidence of the need satisfaction of both the individual and the organization.¹

Quantitative Data and Analysis

Five items on the "Informal Communications in Organizations" questionnaire addressed themselves to assessing the level of activity of the informal communication system of a principal. Of these items on the questionnaire, four were found to be statistically

¹Keith Davis, Human Relations at Work (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), p. 238.

significant at or beyond the .05 level of significance. Figure 10 indicates the number of times that the informal communication system of the school regularly disseminates organizational information to the staff in a typical work week. (All figures reported are mean scores.)



Number of Times Organizational Information
Is Disseminated During a Week

The means of the responses of principals range from 4.0 to 8.4. For this item, using analysis of variance (ANOVA), the F-ratio (7.79) is beyond the .01 level of significance. The Newman-Keuls procedure indicates that the results are significant between all quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid.

For purposes of this study, a minimal level of activity on the grapevine is considered to be a score of three or less on this item, while a score of eight or more indicates a highly active grapevine. Scores between three and eight are considered to constitute a moderate level of grapevine activity.

The results of this item indicate that high task/low relationship (Quadrant I (QI)) principals have highly active grapevines. The grapevines of principals in Quadrants II, III, and IV fall into the moderately active level of grapevine activity. However, the grapevines of Quadrant II principals were more active than the grapevines of Quadrant III principals which, in turn, were more active than the grapevines of Quadrant IV principals. These data indicate that the general day-to-day activity on a grapevine operates at a higher level in schools led by high task/low relationship (QI) principals. Grapevine activity decreases as the curvilinear relationship (Figure 5) progresses through the Situational Leadership grid and is consistent with the grid depicted in Figure 6.

Table 7 depicts the amount of participation each type of principal maintains on his informal communication system.

For the purpose of this study, the extremes of the following scale are considered to be one and two at the lower extreme, while six and seven constitute the upper

extreme. Scores of three, four and five are considered moderate scores.

Table 7

Amount of Information Principals Pass on to Various People

All | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | None

	HiTask LoRel.	HiRel. HiTask	HiRel. LoTask	LoTask Lo.Rel.	F	Level of Sig.
Superiors	5.9	5.0	3.3	2.1	14.30	.01
Subordinates	4.9	3.8	4.6	5.6	4.06	.05
Peers	6.0	5.2	3.7	2.1	19.49	.01

As the ANOVA table indicates, these data are more conclusive for informal communication among administrators than principal-subordinate communication. For the later, the significant difference, using the Newman-Keuls procedure, was found only between principals in Quadrants II and IV.

These data indicate that Quadrant I principals pass on the least amount of information to other organizational members. Their scores fall into the moderate range concerning transmission of information to superiors and subordinates. The upper extreme range for a score is registered by these principals concerning transmission of information to peers. Principals in Quadrants II and III registered scores in the moderate range. Quadrant IV principals scored in the moderate range concerning transmission of information to subordinates, while transmission of information to superiors and peers resulted in scores in the lower extreme

of the scale. These data also indicate that principals transmit more information to fellow administrators than they do to their subordinates.

Support for the finding that principals transmit more information to their fellow administrators than to their teachers is provided in Table 8.

Table 8

Number of Times in a Typical Week that Principals Withhold Information From Various People

	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	10+
	HiTask LoRel.	HiRel. HiTask	HiRel. LoTask	LoTask LoRel.	F	Level of Sig.	
Superiors	1.2	1.8	3.4	4.6	5.27	.01	
Subordinates	9.0	7.0	3.8	2.4	12.55	.01	
Peers	4.8	4.8	1.8	1.6	3.69	.05	

As the table indicates, high task/low relationship (QI) principals withhold less information from fellow administrators than principals in the other quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid. This pattern continues through the curvilinear relationship of the grid. The Newman-Keuls procedure indicates a dichotomy exists between high task (QI and QII) and low task (QIII and QIV) principals in the amount of information they withhold from their peers. High task principals withhold less information from their peers than low task principals. The table also indicates that high task/low relationship principals withhold more

information from their subordinates than principals in other quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid. This pattern continues through the curvilinear relationship of the grid. These data imply that Quadrant I principals insulate subordinates from information. Principals in other quadrants, succeedingly engage in more two-way communication, thus they provide their subordinates with more information.

Another question on the "Informal Communication in Organizations" questionnaire provided support for the finding that the level of grapevine activity in a school can be predicted on the basis of the leadership behavior of the principal. The results of this question are depicted in Figure 11.

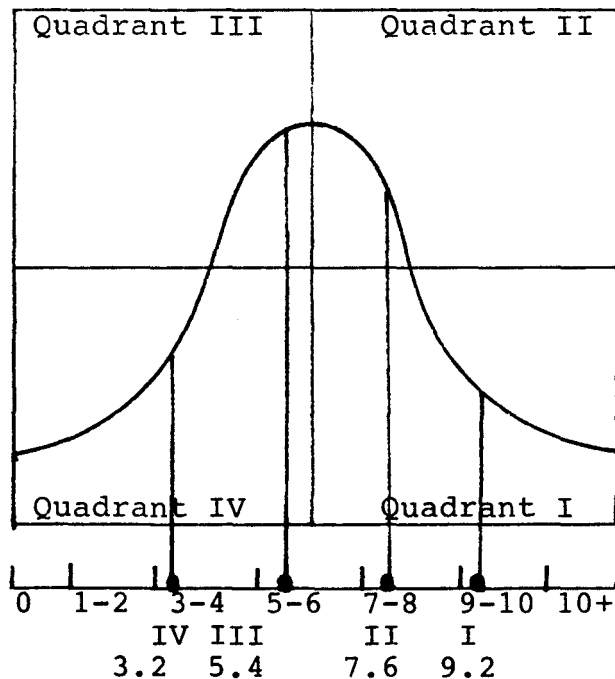


Figure 11

Number of Times in a Typical Week that Principals Think They Have Less than an Adequate Amount of Information

A score of three or less indicates minimal concern about the amount of information transmitted on the grapevine, while eight or more indicates a great concern. Scores between three and eight are moderate scores.

The responses of Quadrant I principals registered in the upper extreme which indicate that these principals complain of not having adequate information. Quadrant II and Quadrant III principals placed their responses in the moderate range indicating some dissatisfaction with the amount of information flow. The mean score of Quadrant IV principals also placed in the moderate range. This result was at the lower end of the moderate range indicating that Quadrant IV principals expressed the least concern about the amount of information they receive.

The means of the responses of principals range from 3.2 to 9.2. For this item, the ANOVA, $F=14.85$, is beyond the .01 level of significance. Quadrant I principals expressed the greatest concern about not having an adequate amount of information for making the best work related decisions. This concern decreases as the curvilinear relationship (Figure 5) progresses so that Quadrant IV principals do not express as great a concern about inadequate information as do principals in other quadrants. Thus, Figure 11 is consistent with the grid depicted in Figure 6.

One question on the "Informal Communication in Organizations" questionnaire yielded results which were

statistically non-significant. These results are depicted in Figure 12.

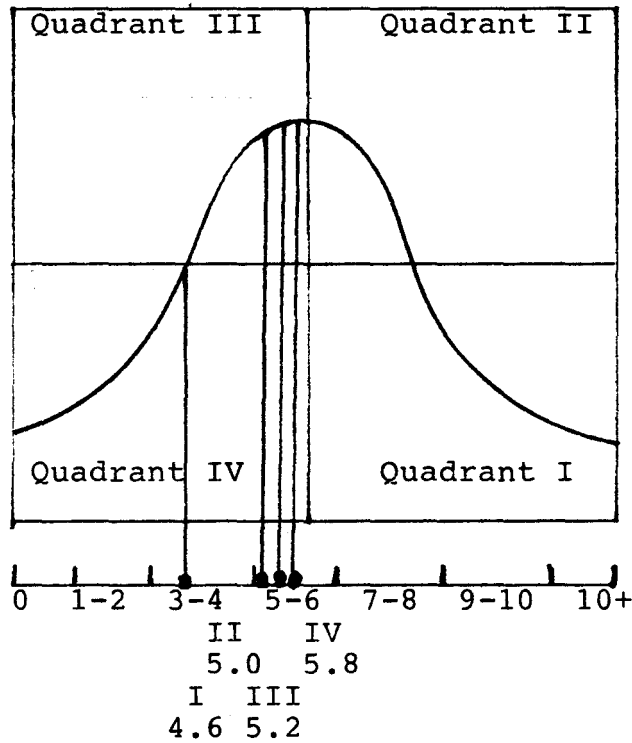


Figure 12

Number of Times in a Typical Week That Principals Receive Information From Their Grapevine From Different Sources

The means of the responses of principals range from 4.6 to 5.8. For this item, the ANOVA, $F=.20$, is not significant at the .05 level of significance. There is no statistically significant difference between the principals in each quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid and the number of times during a week that these principals receive information from their grapevine from different sources.

Based upon the quantitative data analyzed, Hypothesis One is rejected.

Qualitative Data and Analysis

Qualitative data were gathered through the interview instruments, "Assessing Informal Communication" Principals' Form and Key Communicators' Form. The interviews confirmed the analytical findings of the written questionnaire. The interviews also provided explanations for several results obtained in the quantitative data.

Comments by interviewed principals supported quantitative data that a difference in the level of informal communication activity in a school can be discerned on the leadership behavior of the principal. All interviewed high task/low relationship (QI) principals transmit all the information, including rumors and gossip, to their superintendent. They want to keep the superintendent informed. A typical statement which provides a rationale for this transmission of information to the superintendent was provided by a principal who stated that communication among administrators is important and must be maintained because the informal communication system of the teachers is strong and the administration is constantly being tested. What occurs in one building is a test case for what occurs in other buildings. This constant testing by teachers for inconsistency among schools means that the implementation and interpretation of the association contract at the building level requires constant communication among principals. Principals

must coordinate their actions if they wish to present a united front.

Upon examining the comments of principals in other quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid, the following findings can be made. For high relationship/high task (QII) principals, two out of four interviewed principals pass everything on to their fellow administrators. For high relationship/low task (QIII) principals this number drops to one out of four. These principals pass only that information which they think is relevant to some issue at hand or information they think would be detrimental to the district or unfairly slanders the administration or board of education. They make a distinction between what other administrators ought to know, what other administrators should not know and what other administrators will know if principals procrastinate in the transmission of the information.

None of the interviewed low task/low relationship (QIV) principals pass all of the information they hear on the grapevine along to other administrators. As a group, they are very selective in what they send to their superintendents. If the principals think the information is important enough to let the superintendent know about, they pass it on. They also transmit information which affects the decision-making process of the superintendents. These findings indicate that as each quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid is examined, the amount of information

transmitted by principals to superintendents lessens. Quadrant I principals transmit the greatest amount of information to superintendents, while Quadrant IV principals transmit the least. These findings do not contradict the findings reported previously in Table 7. Table 7 refers to all superiors of the principal in the organization. The findings just reported apply to transmission of information to the superintendent only.

Other issues regarding the level of activity of the informal communication system of a principal were discovered from the interviews of principals and their key communicators. Data gathered from these interviews indicate that whatever the day to day level of activity, there are identifiable events and situations during the year when any informal communication system becomes very active. These situations are mentioned because they affect what type and how much information is available to the principal through his informal communication system.

Although all principals did not agree on all specific instances when their grapevines became highly active, the following situations were designated by most principals (at least fourteen of the sixteen interviewed principals) as those situations during which their grapevines are the most active:

1. September--the informal communication system is quite active because teachers have not seen each other or

the principal over the summer.

2. April--Declining enrollment necessitates reduction in force. In most districts reduction in force (RIF) takes place by seniority. Nontenured teachers are released as a matter of policy and rehired if needed. In some districts reduction in force has reached into the tenured ranks. In most districts, the grapevine becomes quite active because teachers do not know exactly their positions on the seniority list. Reduction in force generates a feeling of insecurity that affects everyone. As one superintendent, a key communicator, commented, "It's a demoralizing process, not only for people who get the axe, but also for those who remain. Teachers never get use to it. They have friends who are affected."

3. May-- Declining enrollment also necessitates teacher reassignment at the end of the year. There may be a need for teachers to change grade level assignments or building assignments. One principal commented that he used his grapevine to obtain information on whether or not a specific teacher would be willing to change assignments.

In addition to these three seasonal effects on the grapevine, there are other situations which lead to the activation of the informal communication system. Generically, principals in the interviews have labelled these as political issues. All interviewed principals identified the following issues:

1. Board of Education actions such as budget cuts, program cuts and/or policy changes, board of education elections and referenda, and closing a school building. In closing a school, the grapevine activates at the first mention of such a possibility. This topic of discussion continues through at least the first year after the building is closed.

2. Contract negotiations. "During negotiations, school districts are rampant with rumors, good, bad and indifferent." It is difficult for the negotiation team to keep their membership informed of what happened in the session the previous night before rumors begin to spread. In general, during negotiation time, the principal receives a great deal of information from his teachers. This transmission of information to the principal implies that teachers want the principal to know their point of view even though most principals are not directly involved in negotiations. Teachers expect the principals to pass the information along to the superintendent. In those districts that have had a teachers' strike, the grapevine was most active during events leading up to the strike when there was an enormous amount of intra-school communication. Grapevines are also active during the strike itself.

Other issues which lead to an activation of the grapevine include turn over in the superintendency and unusual personnel situations, e.g., someone is fired and

teachers believe that the person involved is being unfairly treated.

Key communicators agreed with the assessment of their principals about when the informal communication system is active. Those teachers who were identified as key communicators, doubted the sincerity of the administration during contract negotiations. Their attitudes were typified by this statement, "During off years of contract negotiations, the grapevine is not as active. It is more active when there's more going on than they're telling us. Some things are going on that are unusual and they're not willing to make it public." This statement implies that an undercurrent of mistrust exists between administration and staff. The grapevines become active as both sides attempt to fill in their information gaps. Both sides have information that the other side wants and needs. Thus, any mistrust that exists intensifies during contract negotiations.

There are other factors, revealed by interviews, which affect the amount of information available to a principal and thus affect the level of activity on the informal communication system of the principal. Among these aspects which affect the level of informal communication activity of an organization are the superintendent and his leadership style. The actions of the superintendent affect all district personnel and are "grist for the mill." The actions of the superintendent especially affect schools led by high

relationship (QII and QIII) principals. Seventy-five percent of the principals in these quadrants expressed the view that there is nothing exciting occurring in their buildings, but they were aware that their teachers were discussing things occurring in the district, such as superintendent and/or board actions.

The leadership style of the superintendent also dictates whether there are districtwide committees in the district. Such committees are one of the main conduits of informal communication information. Ten of the sixteen districts which comprised the interview sample have such committees. These committees foster communication among buildings. In school districts where such committees exist, principals and key communicators expressed the opinion that their grapevines spend more time discussing district information rather than building level information. Where no districtwide committees exist, the association representative in each building was the communication link connecting the buildings.

Lastly, the interviews discerned another factor which contributes to the level of informal communication activity in an organization--informal communication to parents. All four high task/low relationship (QI) principals held the view that the teachers' associations disseminate informally to parents the positive things that are happening so that the association can take the credit. Tough

problems, in this view, are left for administrators. Also, in two of the districts, the informal communication between teachers and board members was so efficient that teachers knew by morning what happened in the executive session of the board the previous night. Teachers, according to these principals, use informal communication with the community as a tool for power and thus maintain a highly active informal communication system between themselves and parents. Informal communication between parents and teachers provides these principals with a rationale for maintaining their own informal communication system as a counterbalance to attempts by teacher groups to influence parents.

Intercommunication between teachers and parents was not seen as a problem by the eight high relationship (QII and QIII) principals. The parent-teacher associations (P.T.A.) of these schools were not politically active, but provided social services for students and/or volunteers for the school.

In contrast to the viewpoint expressed by high task/low relationship (QI) principals, all four low task/low relationship (QIV) principals thought that their boards of education were by and large anonymous, with little direct effect on teachers; that parents received no distorted information informally from teachers; and, that their P.T.A.s were very active in terms of having input into how

the money they raise for the schools is spent. But, there were no instances of highly active grapevines between teachers and parents.

The data can be interpreted to mean that some principals are not that concerned with informal communication between parents and teachers. Those that are concerned thought that such contact between the two groups threatens administrative prerogatives and that the principal, only, should speak at the building level for his school. To counterbalance this supposed threat, such principals maintain contact with their parent groups.

Based upon the quantitative and qualitative data analyzed for this hypothesis, Hypothesis One is rejected.

Implications of Findings for Hypothesis One

Data compiled for Hypothesis One yielded the finding that the general day-to-day level of informal communication activity in a school can be predicted based on the leadership behavior of the principal.

The data imply that organizational members attempt to discover what is taking place in their environment from whatever reliable source is available. The more insulated members appeared to be from information, the greater was their desire to know.

Quadrant I principals have the highest level of day-to-day activity on their informal communication systems. With their staffs, such principals held on to information

and dispensed it on a need to know basis. The data imply that organizational members communicate informally in order to seek information which is being denied them through formal communication channels. The data indicate that Quadrant I principals are more comfortable when communicating with other administrators. Communicating with other administrators implies that the interpersonal relationship between Quadrant I principals and their staffs are not developed to the point where these principals can communicate as effectively with their staffs as they do with fellow administrators. Communicating with administrators further implies that such principals transmit information to other administrators in the hopes of establishing a reciprocity of information with these administrators.

The data indicated Quadrant II, III, and IV principals are succeeding less concerned with obtaining and receiving any and all information that passes through their grapevines. The data suggest Quadrant II principals respond to the human nature of their teachers in that they recognize the level of grapevine activity reflects what seems to be occurring in the organizational environment. The data suggest Quadrant III principals recognized that teachers need a certain amount of information in order to perform their appointed tasks with a minimal amount of direction.

The lowest level of grapevine activity was found in

schools led by Quadrant IV principals. The data analysis verified that principals attempt to communicate as much information as possible as soon as possible. This flow of information means that there is less information available to be carried on the informal communication system.

A further implication of these findings is that professional staff members were asking for the opportunity to be heard by other members of the formal and informal organizations, and also, that their contributions be considered as important assistance toward the success of the organization.

Based upon these implications, principals could design problem-solving processes which emphasize the use of ego-building responses for any and all sources of ideas, concerns, and issues. The possibility exists that this design might reduce the conflict potential often assumed in formal and informal relationships. The product of this design might be increased levels of trust and honesty among organizational members and might highlight the value of authentic behavior between representatives of the formal and informal organizations. The product might also be the more effective attainment of the goals of the organization and its members.

Another finding related to Hypothesis One was that although there are differing degrees of day-to-day level of grapevine activity, there are seasonal situations which

have an effect on the level of any informal communication activity. Inferences from the data indicate that the current trend of declining enrollment has produced climates of uncertainty in school districts regarding teaching jobs and teaching assignment. Since jobs and assignments are central life interests, teachers naturally discuss them.

Principals could be cognizant of this interest of teachers concerning their jobs. In the process, principals might make an accurate needs identification for the organization which takes into account the personal component and the structural requirements inherent in all organizations. As a result of this needs identification, principals might delineate the procedures that are followed in the determination of the goals and objectives of the organization. In this case, delineating procedures might mean publishing a seniority list of teachers. Operating within established procedures might allay the fears and frustrations of teachers concerning their jobs and assignments. By being responsive and reliable in their behavior, principals convey the attitude to their staffs that the system exists to achieve a balance between the needs of both the individual and the organization.

The level of informal communication activity is consistent with the style of leadership behavior as determined by the LEAD-self of Hersey and Blanchard. The thirst for information is greatest among subordinates of Quadrant I

principals because these principals, consistent with Situational Leadership Theory, employ one-way communication.² Such principals inform subordinates on a need to know basis. As this behavior on the part of principals lessens throughout the curvilinear relationship of the Situational Leadership grid, (Figure 5) organizational members have less reason to search for information. The need to seek information lessens because, as each quadrant is examined, each type of principal succeedingly employs two-way communication with other organizational members.³

Statements in the professional literature disagree concerning when informal communication systems become active. There are authors who indicate that grapevines are quite active when the formal system of communication withholds information concerning an important issue. The need to know is always present with the employees of an organization.⁴ On the other hand, Davis found that where formal communication was inactive, the grapevine did not fill the void. There was simply a lack of any communication.⁵

The position that grapevines are active to fill the

²Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, Management of Organizational Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977), p. 169.

³Ibid.

⁴Robert Dubin, Human Relations in Administration (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1974), p. 68.

⁵Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 226.

void left by formal communication is supported by the findings of this study in that those principals who engage in directive one-way communication have informal communication systems that are highly active. Highly active grapevines are signals to the administration that the formal communication system is not operating adequately. It might be viable for principals to assess the demands of both the formal and informal channels of communication. Based upon the assessment of these two types of demands, principals can assemble the data necessary to meet the demand which they previously identified. From these data, alternatives designed to improve the operation of communication within the organization can be made by principals.

The stressful situations found in this study which cause the activation of the grapevine corroborate findings reported in the literature. The level of activity of the grapevine increases during periods of excitement and insecurity. For example, a grapevine transmits information concerning such matters as staff promotions, reassignments and layoffs.⁶ During periods of excitement and insecurity, there is the potential that the grapevine might become out of control.⁷ Thus, it is paramount that principals assess

⁶Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 226.

⁷Ibid., p. 225.

the demands of their grapevines before any situation reaches such a critical stage. Findings from this study also supported the contention of Kennedy that people like to hear everything about people they know.⁸ Thus, when people have not seen each other over a period of time, they exchange information concerning what has occurred in the interim.

Summary of Hypothesis One

According to Situational Leadership Theory, principals identified as being low in relationship behavior and high in task behavior are very directive towards their staff. Answers to the written questionnaire and interviews support this view of the behavior of Quadrant I principals. These principals have the highest level of day-to-day activity on their informal communication systems.

Data indicated less active day-to-day activity on grapevines as each successive quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid is examined. Quadrant II principals, consistent with Quadrant II behavior of Situational Leadership Theory, provide enough information to teachers for them to accomplish tasks and accept organizational goals. Quadrant III principals recognize that teachers need a certain amount of information in order to perform their appointed tasks with a moderate amount of direction. These principals

⁸ Marilyn Moats Kennedy, Office Politics (Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1980), p. 50.

attempt to supply the amount of information they think will most effectively serve this purpose. This behavior is consistent with Quadrant III behavior of Situational Leadership Theory.

Consistent with Situational Leadership Theory, Quadrant IV principals provide minimal amounts of direction to the staff. Informal communication activity is lowest in schools led by these principals.

Other factors which appear to have an effect on the level of activity of informal communication systems are: the strength of the teachers' association in the district, the leadership behavior of the superintendent, board of education visibility, and the activism of parental organizations (P.T.A.) at the school. The actions of each generate information which is carried on either formal or informal communication systems. These factors cross all quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid.

The major implication for this hypothesis is that the principal might assess the demands of both the formal and informal channels of communication. Based upon this assessment, the principal might design alternatives to improve the operation of communication within his organization.

Quantitative and qualitative data analyzed for this hypothesis indicated that a differentiation concerning the level of activity on the informal communication system of a

principal can be made on the basis of the leadership behavior of the principal as determined by the LEAD instruments. These findings are consistent with the Situational Leadership grid depicted in Figure 6.

Thus, Hypothesis One is rejected based upon the findings.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between the placement of principals in the quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid of Hersey and Blanchard and the uses by these principals of their informal communication systems.

Informal communication systems exist to satisfy the need of organizational members for social interaction and their need to know. It is possible for principals to utilize their grapevines in such a way as to satisfy the needs of members in order to further the attainment of organizational goals. The grapevine can be used by principals to develop group identity and interest in work. By planting information favorable to the organization on the grapevine, principals create climates conducive to the attainment of organizational goals. It is also possible for principals to utilize their grapevines in an attempt to further their own aims--e.g. to gain power or to coverup.⁹

If cultivated, the informal communication system of the principal permits him to gain advance knowledge. Advance knowledge allows the principal to prepare for the future. Time to plan strategies means that the principal has more latitude and the opportunity for creativity; he no longer merely reacts to events around him. The principal has some control over his environment.¹⁰

⁹Frederick C. Wendel, "The Communication Grapevine," in The Public Relations Almanac for Educators (Camp Hill, Pa.: Educational Communication Center, 1980), p. 33.

¹⁰Kennedy, p. 50.

Because communication channels are intimately related to control, managers make the most effective use of their informal communication system when they integrate their grapevines into the formal functioning of their organizations.¹¹

Quantitative Data and Analysis

Of the items on the "Informal Communication in Organizations" questionnaire which related to the uses by principals of their informal communication systems, two of these questions indicated statistical significance at or beyond the .05 level of significance. One of these findings was reported under Hypothesis One in Table 8.

Table 9 depicts the number of times principals find it necessary to expand on the information they transmit.

Table 9

Number of Times in a Typical Week Principals Expand on Information as They Pass it on.

	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	10+
	HiTask LoRel.	HiRel. HiTask	HiRel. LoTask	LoTask LoRel.	F	Level of Sig.	
To superiors	8.2	5.6	5.6	3.4	7.35	.01	
To subordinates	7.8	6.0	5.8	5.0	.69	NS	
To peers	6.4	5.0	4.8	3.2	4.25	.05	

¹¹Alex Bavelas and Dermot Barrett, "An Experimental Approach to Organizational Communication," Personnel 27 (March 1951), p. 367.

As the table indicates, using ANOVA and the Newman-Keuls procedure, the data are not significant regarding expansion of information to subordinates. Using the Newman-Keuls procedure, there are also no statistically significant differences between principals in Quadrant II and III regarding these data.

For the purpose of this study, a score of three or less on the scale indicates minimal expansion of information by principals. Moderate scores are scores of four, five, six and seven. A score of eight or more indicates a great amount of expansion of information by principals.

The ANOVA table indicates that for the statistically significant data, Quadrant I principals expanded on information to their superiors a great deal; they expanded on information to peers only moderately. Responses of principals who placed in Quadrants II, III, and IV also registered in the moderate range. However, as the curvilinear relationship progressed through the Situational Leadership grid (Figure 5), the mean responses were lower for each succeeding quadrant.

As reported in Tables 10 and 11, utilizing the chi square technique there are no statistically significant differences between the principals in each quadrant of Situational Leadership grid and the amounts of time these principals spend communicating with the various levels of their organizations--superiors, peers and subordinates.

Table 10

Principals Receive Information Informally From Various Sources (Reported in mean percentages)

	Hi Task Lo Rel.	Hi Rel. Hi Task	Hi Rel. Lo Task	Lo Task Lo Rel.
Superiors	20	20	23	23
Peers	29	24	26	17
Subordinates	51	56	51	60

$\chi^2=4.69$, not significant at the .05 level of significance

Table 11

Principals Send Information Informally to Various People (Reported in mean percentages)

	Hi Task Lo Rel.	Hi Rel. Hi Task	Hi Rel. Lo Task	Lo Task Lo Rel.
Superiors	17	26	21	17
Peers	31	22	28	23
Subordinates	52	52	51	60

$\chi^2=5.5$, not significant at the .05 level of significance

Each type of principal spends more than fifty percent of his informal communication time, communicating with his staff. This is true because of the physical proximity of principal and staff. Thus, it is natural that the majority of communication of a principal would be with his staff. These data were true whether the principal is sending or receiving information. These findings refer to quantity of time spent communicating. They do not dispute the earlier evidence that high task principals transmit more (in the sense of insightful) information to fellow administrators. That result refers to

the quality of communication between principal and fellow administrators. Thus, in terms of quantity, principals communicate informally with their staff; in terms of quality, high task principals communicate informally with fellow administrators.

Table 12 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the method of informal communication (face-to-face vs. telephone) used by principals in each of the quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid.

Table 12

Principals Communicate Informally Using These Methods
(Reported in mean percentages)

	Hi Task Lo Rel.	Hi Rel. Hi Task	Hi Rel. Lo Task	Lo Task Lo Rel.
Face-to-face	65	73	69	70
Telephone	35	27	31	30

$\chi^2=5.28$, not significant at .05 level of significance

Table 13 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference among quadrants of principals, regarding the amount of change principals make in information before they informally pass it to other organizational members. Principals in all quadrants change a minimum amount of information before they transmit it. The only exceptions are low task/low relationship (QIV) principals who change moderate amounts of information they pass on to subordinates. However this moderate score is at the lower extreme of the moderate range.

Table 13

The Amount of Change Necessary Before Principals Pass on Information

A small amount	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>							A large amount
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	HiTask LoRel.	HiRel. HiTask	HiRel. LoTask	LoTask LoRel.	F	Level of Sig.		
Superiors	2.1	2.3	2.1	2.1	.06	NS		
Subordinates	2.8	3.3	2.9	3.4	.76	NS		
Peers	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.0	.50	NS		

Some of the quantitative data which dealt directly with uses principals make of their informal communication systems indicated statistical significance using analysis of variance. There were also variables which were components of the utilization of grapevines by principals. These variables related to uses principals make of their grapevines and resulted in statistics that were not significant. Based on the statistical significance of the data analyzed, Hypothesis Two is rejected.

Qualitative Data and Analysis

Although there is no statistically significant difference in the method of informal communication (face-to-face vs. telephone) used by each type of principal (Table 12), all of the interviews did reveal a difference in the method of communication, formal or informal, employed by each type of principal. The method of communication affects the use each principal makes of his informal communication

system. The more principals communicate using formal means, e.g. memos, the less they communicate informally, e.g. face to face. Thus, those principals who write memos use their informal communication systems differently than those principals who rely on the face-to-face method to communicate.

Among the uses that principals make of their informal communication systems, Table 14 depicts those that were inferred from the interviews. Items were included in the table only if all principals in the quadrant used their informal communication systems for the specific purpose.

Table 14

Uses of Informal Communication Systems Employed by Each Type of Principal

Quadrant I
High Task
Low Relationship

1. to gather information
2. to disseminate information
to fellow administrators
3. to clarify information
4. to interpret formal written
statements
5. to counterbalance any infor-
mation disseminated by
teachers' associations which
is favorable to teachers, but
unfavorable to the admini-
stration
6. to protect the prerogatives
of the principal
7. to gain power in the organi-
zations
8. to set the stage so that
teachers must accept situations
10. to assess the emotional state
of the staff

Quadrant II
High Relationship
High Task

1. to gather information
2. to disseminate information
to fellow administrators
3. to clarify information
4. to interpret formal written
statements
5. to counterbalance any infor-
mation disseminated by
teachers' associations which
is favorable to teachers, but
unfavorable to the admini-
stration
6. to protect the prerogatives
of the principal
10. to assess the emotional well-
being of the staff
11. to learn about the people
the principal works with
12. to "stroke" the staff-- as a
positive means of enhancing
staff morale
13. to discern the needs of
teachers

Table 14 continued

Quadrant III
High Relationship
Low Task

1. to exchange information
3. to clarify information
4. to interpret formal written statements
5. as a public relations tool to present a positive image of school
6. to involve teachers in the decision-making process
9. to measure decisions--how they will be received and how they should be implemented
10. to assess the emotional well-being of the staff
11. to learn about the people the principal works with
12. to "stroke" the staff--as a positive means of enhancing staff morale
13. to discern the needs and wants of teachers
14. to prepare the staff for the arrival of new procedures, policies, reports, etc.

Quadrant IV
Low Relationship
Low Task

1. to exchange information
3. to clarify information
4. to interpret formal written statements
6. to involve teachers in the decision-making process
9. to measure decisions--how they will be received and how they should be implemented
10. to assess the emotional well-being of the staff
11. to learn about the people the principal works with
13. to discern the needs of teachers
14. to prepare the staff for the arrival of new procedures policies, reports, etc.

To summarize Table 14: high task/low relationship (QI) principals use their informal communication systems to direct their staffs. Principals gather information, make decisions and tell the staff what, how, when and where to do assigned tasks. This typical Quadrant I behavior was typified by one principal who commented, "Teachers can't make any decisions if they're given too many choices. After operating with elementary children, teachers begin to operate at that level and must be treated as such." This behavior is characteristic of the "telling" style of leadership as defined in Situational Leadership Theory.

While high relationship/high task (QII) principals are also concerned about the completion of assigned tasks, the data from interviews imply that such principals are not as concerned with the achievement of personal power. It is evident that these principals use their informal communication systems to "stroke" the staff to get them to accept the decisions that the principals have already made. Such principals believe that they must make the decisions because their staffs do not want to get involved in the decision-making process. As one principal commented, "If I stand back and attempt to let the staff decide on something, all I get is inconsistency or the attitude 'Is it really important?' It's difficult to get people to volunteer to participate in cooperative management-teacher planning." This behavior is characteristic of the "selling" style of

leadership as defined in Situational Leadership Theory.

High relationship/low task (QIII) principals exchange information with their staff. They use their informal communication system as a positive means of enhancing staff morale to get the staff to buy into the decision-making process. This behavior is characteristic of the "participating" style of leadership as defined in Situational Leadership Theory.

Low relationship/low task (QIV) principals use their informal communication system for any changes in procedure, policies, reports, etc. These changes might affect the boundaries that have been established by the principal for these groups. Once the limits are defined, the staff develops solutions to its problems. This behavior is characteristic of the "delegating" style of leadership as defined in Situational Leadership Theory.

The implication of the findings in Table 8 supported by interview data, in relation to the uses by principals of their informal communication systems was that high task/low relationship (QI) principals disseminate information to the staff using the timing of the release most beneficial to their purposes.

This keeping information "close to the vest" decreases with each succeeding quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid. High relationship (QII and QIII) principals took a middle ground in the transmission of

information. These principals want to know any information currently on the grapevine, but they do not want to be the person to pass it along. Thus these principals do not share everything with others in the organization. They believe that what ever happens in their building should remain there. Consequently, if they make mistakes, they do not share the consequences with other administrators. They expressed agitation when such information leaked and they appeared defensive in answering questions about such incidents. This attitude inferred that such principals use their grapevines as a public relations tool to present a positive image to anyone outside of the physical confines of the school.

Low task/low relationship (QIV) principals viewed themselves as open and honest with information available to them. These principals are not concerned with actively maintaining a pulse on their grapevines. Thus, they transmit only information they believe useful to others. They do not want to bother people with what they consider trivial information.

Thus, in terms of exchange of information, the data imply that the uses of principals of their informal communication systems range from one end, principals direct who receives and/or sends information--to the other end of a continuum, principals and/or staff send and/or receive information.

The interviews supported the quantitative data concerning the amount of expansion each type of principal believes is necessary before they pass information to other organizational members. High task/low relationship (QI) principals perform the greatest amount of expansion of information that they transmit to fellow administrators. During the interviews, such principals remarked that to better understand any information which they transmit, they believe that it is necessary to give any pertinent details concerning the information such as historical background of the information and any ramifications which might result from the information. They often find it appropriate to pass along their opinion on the disposition of any information.

High relationship (QII and QIII) principals expand on information to a lesser extent. Low task/low relationship (QIV) principals do very little expansion. Such principals pass on the information as is and let their colleagues reach their own conclusions.

Principals evidently make a distinction between transmitting information embellished with such additions as historical background and personal opinions and changing the nature of the information. There was no statistically significant difference between the leadership behavior of principals and whether they changed the nature of the information they transmitted (e.g., used different words, shifted

emphasis, simplified). Principals do not change information; they pass it on unadulterated.

The interviews also provided data as to which method of communication was mainly employed by each type of principal. All four high task/low relationship (QI) principals communicate mainly through formal means--the memo. Principals sent memos because teachers, when directed informally, failed to perform assigned tasks and used as an excuse that they had misunderstood the directives of the principal. Having a memo available, permitted the principal to have written evidence of his edicts.

Although three of four high task/high relationship (QII) principals communicated by memos, these principals do not take as oppressive an approach as the Quadrant I principals. They communicate by memo because it is best for teachers to have the information written and in front of them. If these principals, on occasion, discuss something with an individual teacher, they write the information down and disseminate the memo to the staff because the teacher involved spreads her interpretation of the principal's answer. As one principal remarked, "When communicating informally, you don't get to everybody fast enough or efficiently enough or you may miss someone's opinion. Rumors start because some have the information and some don't."

Two of four high relationship/low task (QIII) principals communicate by memo rather than face-to-face. These

principals intellectually realize that they should operate in a manner which fosters human relations, face-to-face. They use this method when they feel comfortable with the individuals involved. But, emotionally these principals prefer sending memos rather than dealing face-to-face with a hostile situation. Their attitude seems to be, put it in writing and be safe.

All interviewed low relationship/low task (QIV) principals communicate with their staffs mainly utilizing the face-to-face method. Although each might write a weekly calendar of events or post a notice on the office counter, these principals transmit their information face-to-face with the individuals involved. Principals found that their staffs are auditory, not visual learners; teachers retain information better if they are told face-to-face rather than giving them a memo.

In an attempt to substantiate whether principals operate mainly through formal or informal means, they were asked during the interviews whether they used a tactic of informal communication systems, sending out trial balloons. A trial balloon is a concern, issue, idea on which the principal must make a decision. Before he reaches a decision he informally seeks the opinions of others. Principals who do not trial balloon, keep their own counsel and make the decisions by themselves.

Consistent with Situational Leadership Theory, four

out of four high task/low relationship (QI) interviewed principals practice one-way communication and thus do not trial balloon. They pride themselves on being precise decision-makers whose ideas are organized and thus in no need of teacher input. Although three out of four high relationship/high task (QII) principals do not consciously trial balloon, after the decision has been reached, they may sound out a fellow administrator on the options of presentation of the decision or methods of implementing the decision.

Two of four high relationship/low task (QIII) principals try to measure decisions through the informal processes before they come out as directives. Such principals think that teachers need to accept a decision as much as possible. Asking their opinions gives teachers the belief that the principal did listen even if the decision results in a modification of what they wanted.

While high relationship/low task (QIII) principals tend to send trial balloons to a very few select individuals, all low task/low relationship (QIV) principals ask a variety of people. They attempt to convey to every teacher a feeling of worth that they have input to the principal. Consistent with Quadrant IV behavior, these principals expressed their belief that the principal needs to have tasks done and does not care how they are accomplished. If teachers are more comfortable with the decision, the

decision has a greater chance of achieving its goal. And the more comfortable teachers are with the decision, the more teachers believe that they have ownership of it.

Thirteen of the sixteen interviewed key communicators agreed with the assessment of their principals on whether the principal trial balloons or not. There was one disagreement in each of Quadrant II, III, and IV. In each instance the key communicator denied that the principal trial ballooned when the principals thought that they did. Each key communicator related an incident where the principal made a decision and did not anticipate the reaction of the staff to the decision. In each instance, the routine of the organization was disrupted.

These findings are consistent with those reported earlier concerning the uses principals make of formal (memos) vis-a-vis informal (face-to-face) methods of communication. It is difficult for principals to informally assess the reactions of teachers if they communicate mainly by memos.

Based upon the quantitative and qualitative data analyzed, Hypothesis Two is rejected.

Implications of Findings for Hypothesis Two

Data relevant to Hypothesis Two yielded the finding that the uses a principal makes of his informal communication system can be predicted based on the leadership behavior of the principal. The data imply that high task (QI

and QII) principals use their informal communication systems to gather rather than disseminate information. Such principals view exclusivity of information as a power enhancer. This attitude conveys that these principals use their informal communication systems as a means of protecting their positions and gaining power in their organizations. Such principals believe that their positions are threatened if they are not in control of every situation which might occur in their buildings. For this reason, they maintain a constant pulse on their grapevines to know what information is to be found there. Denying the staff full access to information trivialized the value of any concerns and ideas that the staff might have. Thus, concern for individual needs is minimized by these principals which might lead to the principal stifling the creativity on the part of the staff.

The data suggest that low task (QIII and QIV) principals use their informal communication systems to exchange information with other organizational members. This behavior implies that these principals are afforded the opportunity to develop their interpersonal relations more fully with their staffs. Interpersonal contact can assist in the satisfaction of the need of the staff for social interaction.

A further implication based on these data is that high task principals who direct the flow of information

towards themselves manage through organizational strategies which focus upon leadership by position. Low task principals who participate in the flow of information utilize strategies which focus on cooperative teacher-management planning.

Based upon these implications, it would appear viable for principals to concentrate on the establishment of informal communication models which solicit input from all levels of the organization. Effective informal communication channels can be the means of gathering and organizing data for the improvement of the organization. At the same time, these channels can assist in the satisfaction of interpersonal relationships. Principals might create strategies for acting upon information gathered through such communication channels. Such channels can be of considerable importance as a means of improving organizational effectiveness and personal efficiency.

The data also imply that by disseminating information to their staffs through memos, high task principals attempt to control the flow of information. Such principals use the information gap--between what they know and what their teachers know--to direct the activities of their teachers. The data can be interpreted to mean that when principals communicate through formal means, there is too much rigidity. All teachers are treated the same when a memo is released; there is little opportunity for

flexibility when dealing with teachers. The data indicate that the relationship between principal and staff becomes one dimensional with the principal concerned only with the completion of tasks.

Low task principals attempt to maximize the involvement of their staffs in the development and implementation of strategies to achieve organizational goals through the use of the face-to-face method of communication. The data suggest that by communicating face-to-face, principals are afforded the opportunity to more fully develop their interpersonal relations with their staffs. A further implication is that principals build credibility as a person through face-to-face communication. Principals establish a relationship with their teachers which is multi-faceted. Principals are concerned with the completion of tasks while satisfying individual needs.

Based upon these implications, it would seem advisable that principals recognize that some individuals and groups prefer clearly defined mechanisms of information dissemination, while others prefer greater personal contact. Principals might benefit if they spent time analyzing the type of dissemination model which would best assist their staffs in the performance of their roles. The dissemination model might be referenced to some pre-identified accountability model in order to measure the effectiveness of the transmission of information. Principals could analyze such

a model on the basis of (1) the degree of importance the information has for organizational effectiveness and personal efficiency; (2) the timing of the release of the information; and, (3) the degree of objectivity that the information demands from its potential recipients.

One final implication from the data that holds for all principals should be noted regarding the uses principals make of their informal communication systems. Sometimes, principals are manipulated by the politics that they have to deal with. Teachers have tenure and are protected by their associations. Principals who do not have these protections, must, on occasion, do things to protect themselves and their positions. Sometimes what they do, and how and what they communicate is not the choice they want to make; it is not a choice, but a necessity if they wish to survive in that particular organization.

Based on the necessity of sometimes having to communicate information unwillingly, it might behoove principals to analyze the existing interactions between their formal organizations and their informal communication systems. Through periodic assessment of these structures, the principal might be able to design strategies to maintain facilitative behaviors on the part of both the organization and the grapevine. Thus, the principal would be better able to transmit information reluctantly, while still maintaining facilitating relations with his informal structure.

The uses principals make of their informal communication systems are consistent with their leadership behavior as determined by the LEAD-self developed by Hersey and Blanchard. Situational Leadership Theory characterizes the behavior of Quadrant I principals as directive.¹² Congruent with the findings of this study, such behavior lessens throughout the curvilinear relationship of the Situational Leadership grid. (Figure 5). Quadrant II principals issue memos so that teachers can have a reference of tasks which concern them. Thus principals provide teachers with enough information to get the staff involved with the accomplishment of specified tasks. Such behavior is congruent with Situational Leadership Theory.¹³ Informal communication systems are used by Quadrant III principals to involve their staffs in cooperative teacher-management planning according to the findings of this study. These findings are again in accordance with Situational Leadership Theory.¹⁴ Grapevines are used by Quadrant IV principals to provide their staffs with the information necessary to meet the goals determined by the staff. This behavior is harmonious with Situational Leadership Theory.¹⁵

¹²Hersey and Blanchard, p. 169.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 170.

The implication that high task principals use their grapevines as a means of protecting their positions and gaining power in their organizations supports the conclusions reached by Simon in the professional literature. Simon stated that managers may use informal communication systems as a means of securing power in the organization.¹⁶ By maintaining a constant pulse on the grapevine, these principals seek information and advance knowledge in an attempt to prepare for any eventualities. According to Kennedy, advance knowledge gives the manager lead time to plan strategies and thus, the opportunity to gain power.¹⁷

An implication of this study was that when principals use memos to communicate with their staffs there is little opportunity for flexibility when dealing with teachers. This implication contradicts the views of Marks, Stoops, and King-Stoops. They wrote that without written information employees were likely to be confused, would not know what was expected of them and were apt to believe that favoritism was the major factor in organizational decisions. Such beliefs are devastating to good human relations and

¹⁶Herbert A. Simon, "Informal Communication and the 'Grapevine'," in Human Relation in Administration, ed. Robert Dubin (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), p. 401.

¹⁷Kennedy, p. 50.

morale.¹⁸

The professional literature provided another viewpoint concerning the benefits of memo vs. face-to-face communication. Wendell advocated the face-to-face method of communication as a tool to develop group identity and interest in work.¹⁹ This viewpoint is corroborated by the data for this hypothesis which indicated that the face-to-face approach develops teacher identification with the school district and its organizational goals.

This disagreement between authorities on the benefits of memo vs. face-to-face communication results from their either-or stance on methods of communication. To reconcile this disagreement, the principals could develop a written teachers' handbook which delineates routine procedures and policies. The written routine is established in advance and can be referred to by principals and their staffs. Also a predetermined number of memos which are issued at predetermined times conditions teachers on what to expect. Predetermined memos and a handbook afford principals the opportunity to work on the interpersonal aspects of their relations with teachers.

Another implication of this study is that one

¹⁸ James R. Marks, Emery Stoops, Joyce King Stoops, Handbook of Educational Supervision (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1978), p. 135.

¹⁹ Wendell, p. 33.

component of achieving organizational goals is through the process of satisfying individual needs. This implication is contrary to an implication from Koehn's study. Koehn stated that the focus of the organization should be directed toward the end results which are desired rather than spending time conducting dialogue about the means for achieving goals.²⁰ Koehn's approach conveys the primary importance of achieving organizational goals, but negates the importance of the process of achieving these goals. It is through this process that individual needs can also be achieved as well as satisfying organizational needs. Satisfying both needs if at all possible is more beneficial than satisfying the need of one at the expense of the other.²¹

Summary of Hypothesis Two

Every communication system consists of two aspects--a formal and informal component. High task (QI and QII) principals communicate to their staffs mainly through formal channels, the memo. Whereas Quadrant I principals use memos so that they have a record of what directives they have issued, Quadrant II principals issue memos so that teachers can have a reference of tasks which concern them. Informal communication systems are used by Quadrant III

²⁰John J. Koehn, "A Study of the Interaction Patterns of the Formal and Informal School Organizations," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1972), p. 212.

²¹Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 224.

principals to do a large part of their communicating. Such principals avail themselves of their grapevines and their key communicators in an attempt to convince the staff to participate in cooperative teacher-management planning. Quadrant IV principals exchange information with their staffs in the process of designing and implementing activities which will satisfy both the needs of the organization and its members.

A major implication for this hypothesis is that principals might analyze the existing interactions between their formal organizations and their informal communication systems. Through periodic assessment of these structures, the principal might be able to design strategies to maintain facilitative behaviors between the two structures.

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered for this hypothesis indicated that a differentiation concerning the uses principals make of their informal communication systems can be made on the basis of the leadership behavior of principals as determined by the LEAD instruments.

Thus, Hypothesis Two is rejected based upon the findings.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between the placement of principals in the quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid of Hersey and Blanchard and the attitudes of these principals toward their informal communication systems.

As conveyors of both the social and organizational information, informal communication systems have the potential to exert a great deal of influence in the organization. On the positive side, grapevines can act as a safety valve to allow organizational members an opportunity to vent their frustrations without jeopardizing their relationships with their superiors. In most instances, the grapevine carries news faster than formal channels. And, the grapevine is most effective as a transmitter of information that the formal system would rather not carry.²² There are instances when information concerning organizational members needs to be transmitted to them. Once the information has been put in writing, even if it is termed "tentative", members tend to accept it as the final decree and are upset if the information has to be altered. To avoid this possible disruption in management-staff relations, this information can be transmitted informally.

Negatively, informal communication systems are viewed as carriers of rumors--unsubstantiated facts. In this view, grapevines spread gossip, destroy staff morale and reputations, lead to irresponsible actions, decrease the

²²Davis, Human Relations at Work, pp. 238-244.

trust level between management and staff and challenge authority²³

Because there is an intimate relationship between communication channels and control, management would prefer explicit and orderly channels of communication along its organizational chart--its line and staff. Orderly channels of communication would make control of information flow easier.²⁴ However, an informal communication system exists in every organization. The attitude of the manager towards his grapevine affects how he relates to his grapevine, and, in part, affects the state of his interpersonal relationships with his staff.

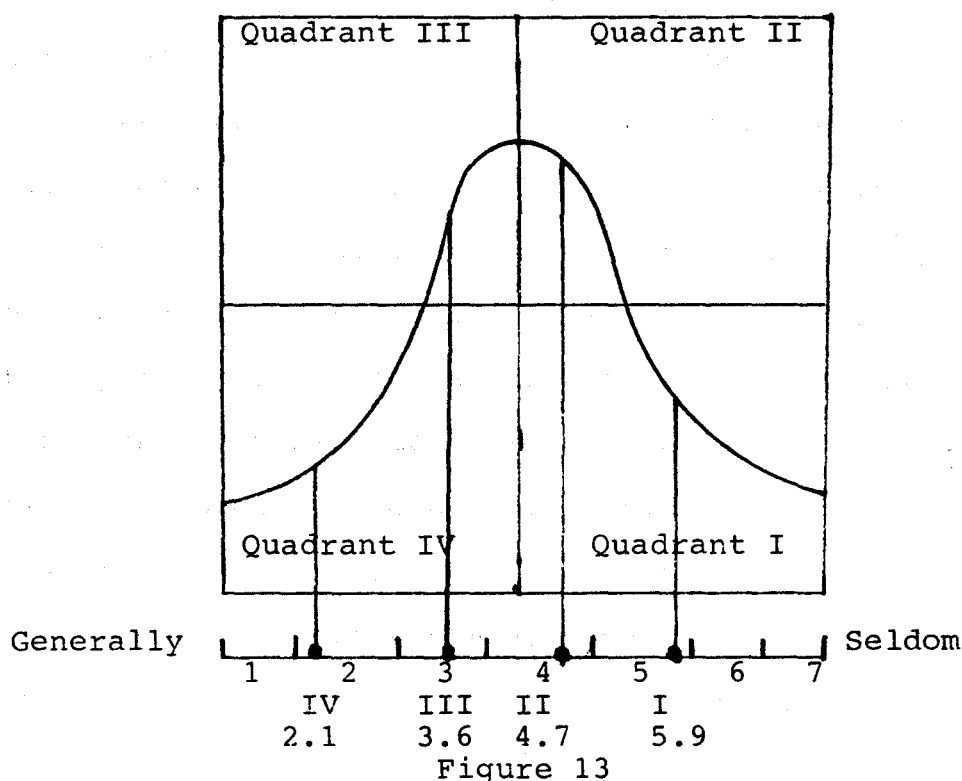
Quantitative Data and Analysis

Six items on the questionnaire "Informal Communication in Organizations" were constructed to determine the attitude of principals toward their informal communication systems. Of these items, two were found to be statistically significant.

Figure 13 depicts the data concerning the view of principals toward grapevines as a legitimate means of communication.

²³Keith Davis, "Management Communications and the Grapevine," Harvard Business Review 31 (September-October 1953), p. 43.

²⁴Bavelas and Barrett, p. 367.



The View of Principals About the Legitimacy of Their Informal Communication Systems

The means of the responses of principals range from 2.1 to 5.9. Using ANOVA, the F-ratio (14.37) is beyond the .01 level of significance. This finding, supported by data from the interviews, indicates that principals differ in their opinion as to the legitimacy of the informal communication system.

The lower extremes of the scale, represented by scores of one and two on the scale, indicate approval of the use of the informal communication system as a method of transmitting organizational information. Scores between two and six exclusive represent a neutral attitude towards the legitimacy of the grapevine. The upper extremes of six and

seven represent a negative attitude towards using the grapevine to transmit organizational information.

The mean responses of principals in Quadrants I, II, and III indicate that these principals, in varying degrees, expressed a neutral attitude towards the legitimacy of the grapevine in transmitting organizational information. Quadrant IV principals indicated through their responses that the informal communication system is a legitimate method of transmitting organizational information. Figure 13 is consistent with the grid depicted in Figure 6.

Table 15 depicts the attitudes of principals regarding the accuracy of their grapevines from various sources.

Table 15

The Accuracy of Informal Communication Systems

	<div>Completely Accurate<div><div>1</div><div>2</div><div>3</div><div>4</div><div>5</div><div>6</div><div>7</div></div>Completely Inaccurate</div>							F	Level of Sig.
	HiTask LoRel.	HiRel. HiTask	HiRel. LoTask	LoTask LoRel.					
Superiors	5.9	4.5	3.7	1.8	11.27	.01			
Subordinates	6.2	5.3	4.8	2.8	13.09	.01			
Peers	5.2	4.1	2.4	1.3	20.95	.01			

As the table indicates Quadrant I (high task/low relationship) principals are suspicious of any information that they receive informally. They are most suspicious of information received from subordinates. This attitude progressively lessens as each quadrant is in turn inspected so that Quadrant IV (low task/low relationship) principals

believe that their grapevines are fairly accurate. Interview data from key communicators confirmed these results. Specifics such as dollar amounts or number of people involved in a situation might be distorted. But, the lowest rating given to the accuracy of the grapevine by the key communicators was eighty percent.

The remainder of the quantitative information obtained for this hypothesis resulted in statistically insignificant data. The results of these data indicate no

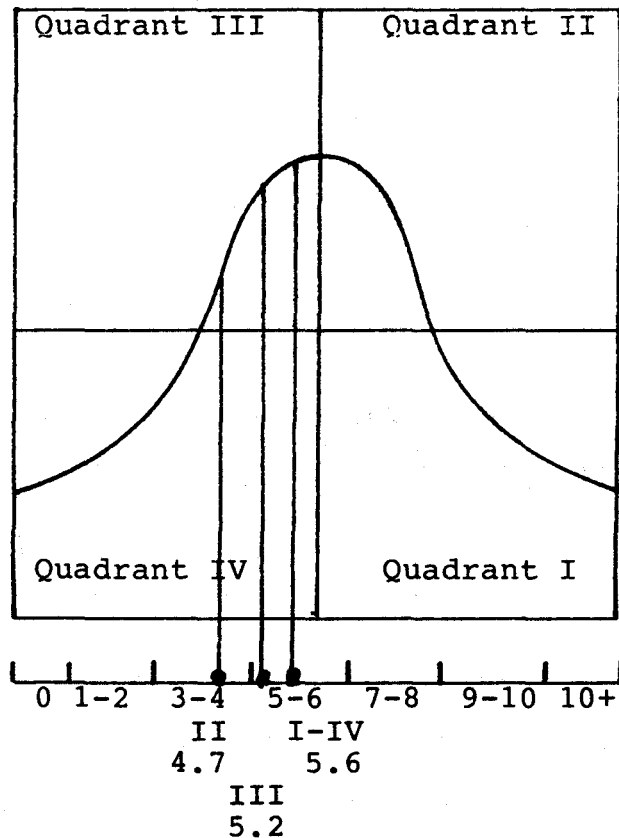


Figure 14

Number of Times in a Typical Week That Principals Receive More Information Than He Can Effectively Use

$F=.30$, not significant at the .05 level of significance

statistical difference between principals in each quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid (Figure 5) and the variables depicted in the following figures and tables.

.. For the purpose of this study, a score of three or less on the scale indicates minimal overload of information to principals. Moderate scores are four, five, six and seven. A score of eight or more indicates a great amount of overload of information to principals. The data from Figure 14 indicate that there is a tendency for principals to be moderately overloaded by information during a typical work week.

Table 16

The View of Principals on the Desirability of Interacting Informally With Various People

	Very Desirable							Very Undesirable	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
	HiTask LoRel.	HiRel. HiTask	HiRel. LoTask	LoTask LoRel.	F	Level of Sig.			
Superiors	3.2	3.6	2.1	2.4	1.51	NS			
Subordinates	2.7	2.1	2.8	2.0	.44	NS			
Peers	2.7	2.1	2.9	2.7	.11	NS			

For the purpose of this study, lower extreme scores are represented by scores of one and two, moderate scores are between three and five and upper extreme scores are six and seven.

Table 16 indicates that the mean responses of principals registered at the upper end of the lower extreme

scores and the lower end of the moderate scores. These results indicate that there is a tendency for principals believe it fairly desirable to interact informally with other organizational members.

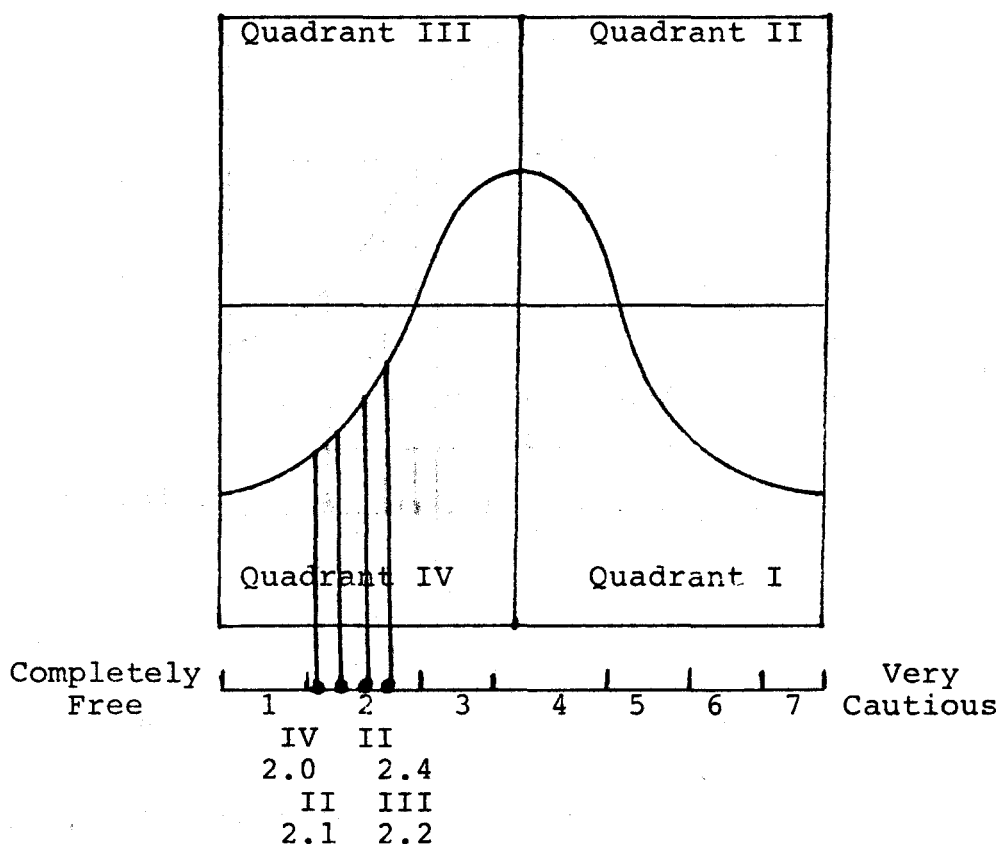


Figure 15

The View of Principals Concerning Their Freedom in Discussing Problems With Their Superiors

$F=.18$, not significant at the .05 level of significance

By using the scale developed for Table 16, Figure 15 indicates that the mean responses of principals registered at the lower extreme. This result means that there is a tendency for principals to think that they are almost completely free in discussing problems with their superiors.

They do not fear retribution at a later date.

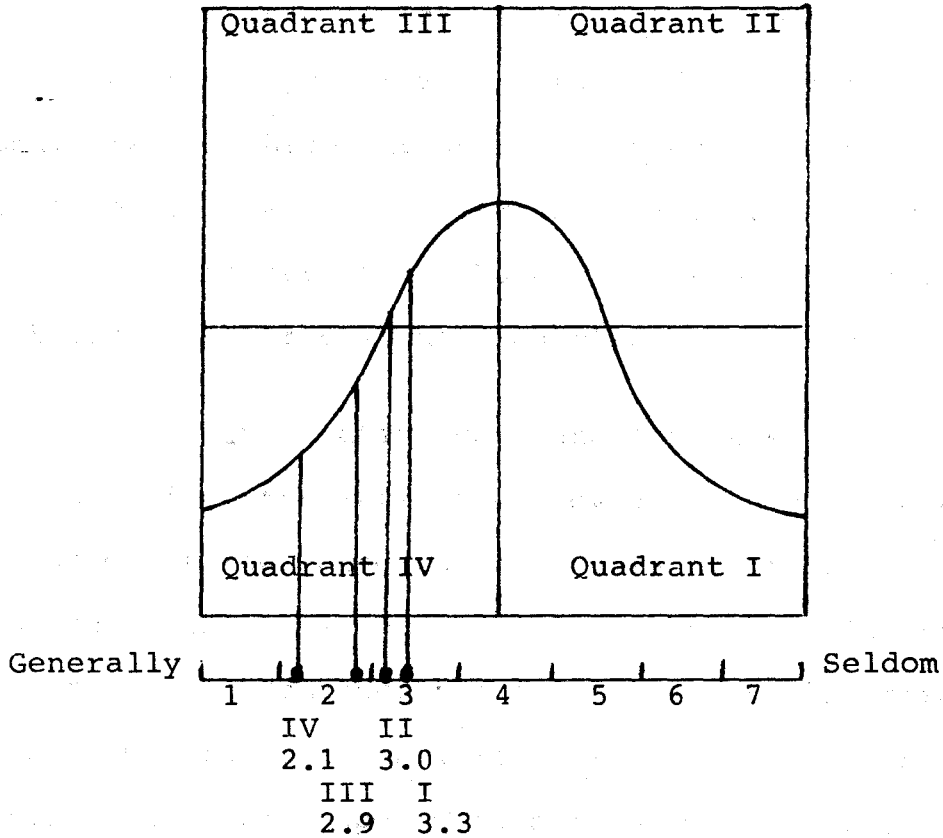


Figure 16

The View of Principals Concerning the Value of Their Informal Communication Systems

$F=1.13$, not significant at the .05 level of significance

Mean scores of one and two indicate a positive attitude concerning the value of informal communication systems. Moderate scores of three, four and five indicate a neutral attitude towards grapevines. The lower extreme of the scale is represented by scores of six and seven indicating a negative attitude concerning the value of grapevines.

Principals in the sample registered moderate scores or scores at the lower extreme. These results indicate that

principals tend to have a mostly positive attitude towards the value of their informal communication systems.

Each variable in this section is a component of the attitudes of principals toward their informal communication systems. Two of these variables produced statistically significant results, while the remainder resulted in statistically insignificant data. Based upon these quantitative data, Hypothesis Three is not rejected.

Qualitative Data and Analysis

Data from the interviews revealed only one area of total agreement regarding the attitudes of principals towards their informal communication systems. All interviewed principals demanded the necessity for all official organizational information which comes from the board of education and/or the superintendent to be transmitted in writing.

Data gathered from the interviews revealed that the attitudes of principals concerning their informal communication systems range from principals who thought that most communication should be through formal means to those who favored informal channels. At one extreme were principals who believe that everything should be in writing. In this view, informal communication is not often seen as a legitimate method for transmitting organizational information. This view implies that informal communication is relegated to a conduit for influencing interpersonal relationships

among the staff and between the principal and the staff. The other extreme of the continuum is represented by principals who view informal communication as a necessary component in the translation of organizational information. In this view, grapevines are an integral element in encouraging staff cohesiveness and interpreting institutional needs.

Between these two extremes lie the attitudes expressed by the remaining principals. Since these attitudes were expressed by principals in the various quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid, it is not possible to categorize these attitudes on the basis of leadership behavior. These interview data verify that the results of the item on the questionnaire asking the attitudes of principals concerning the value of their informal communication systems (Figure 16) were not statistically significant.

The mean responses of principals expressed the viewpoint on the written questionnaire that it is fairly desirable to interact informally with other organizational members. This result contrasts with the finding in the interviews that twenty-five percent of the interviewed principals expressed attitudes at the extremes of the attitudinal continuum. This contrast might result from the fact that such principals evidently make a distinction between communicating informally on a one-to-one basis with individuals and communicating through a quasi-structure such as a grapevine.

The seventy-five percent of principals who are not at the extremes of the attitudinal continuum believe that without their informal communication systems, they would have to work harder in communicating. Their tasks would be completed, but it would take longer to accomplish them.

The prevalent attitude of principals seemed to be that the focus on the grapevine shifts back and forth. When things are relatively quiet in the organization, there is more social information on the informal communication system. During stressful situations, the focus shifts providing valuable feedback to the principal on the actions and reactions of teachers to the situations.

From the interviews it was possible to discern one factor on which the differing attitudes of principals toward their informal communication systems appeared to be predicated. This factor was the strength of the teachers' associations in the school district. In districts where teachers' associations were strong, an adversarial atmosphere appeared to exist between administrator and staff. Key communicators in these districts conveyed the belief that the board of education and sometimes the administration tried to set the buildings at odds. Teachers used their sources at other buildings to confirm or refute the information which was being transmitted about incidents at other buildings. Key communicators commented that the district administration pretends teachers are a splintered

group that have no contact with each other. Principals in these districts stated that teachers do not want to get together, but are forced to because of board actions. In five districts, the principals stated that the association has gained inroads into the decision-making and policy-making functions of the district to the point where teachers sit on policy making committees with administrators and board members. In the past, some board members were elected as a result of their close relationship with the association and therefore leaked board information to the association. Key communicators in these districts confirmed the assessment of these principals.

In school districts where the relationship between administration and teachers' association is less strident, the attitudes of principals toward their informal communication systems were more tolerant. This attitude crossed all quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid. Principals expressed the view that grapevines are a fact of life in any organization. Principals commented that it is important that the grapevine exists as positively as possible; there is no need for an active grapevine if things are operating smoothly in the district. Principals opined that if conditions are good, pay raises are average in comparison to comparable districts, then teachers are not actively involved in the political process.

Each teacher-key communicator viewed their associ-

ations as much stronger than the principals viewed them. These teachers were kept informed by their associations through their grapevine and association newsletter. Because some principals are bypassed by the association communication channels, they are not as aware of the strength of the association as their key communicators.

Based upon the quantitative and qualitative data analyzed, Hypothesis Three is not rejected.

Implications of Findings for Hypothesis Three

Data gathered for Hypothesis Three resulted in the finding that the attitudes of principals toward their informal communication systems were not dependent on the leadership behavior of principals.

Varying degrees of attitudes toward informal communication systems were found to exist among the principals in this study. If these varying attitudes were depicted on a continuum, at one extreme would be the attitudes of principals who believed that any communication which bypasses the principal, as the grapevine of the teachers has the potential to do, is undesirable and must be contained. This attitude implies that such principals view the grapevine as actually or potentially dangerous to their prerogatives. The moderate attitude of principals was that grapevines exist in every organization and they should exist as positively as possible. This attitude can be interpreted to mean that principals view their grapevines as a device which

they could use to influence their staffs to accept organizational goals. At the other extreme would be the attitudes of principals who were unaware of the informal communications systems that operate in their spheres. The data suggest that these principals believed that the informal communication system was so well integrated into the formal organization that the grapevine was not apparently functioning separately. These grapevines are integral elements in interpreting organizational needs.

Based upon these implications, principals must resist any attitudes of resentment toward their informal communication systems. The grapevine does not exist necessarily for the purpose of subverting the efforts of the formal organization.²⁵ Principals must accept the potential complementarity of the informal communication system in the process of achieving the goals and objectives of the organization and its members. This synergic relationship can be enhanced when principals actively include the grapevine into the more formalized structure. In addition, principals could place emphasis upon strategies which allow for open communication patterns between the formal organization and its informal structure. These strategies could validate the efforts and contributions of each structure toward the satisfaction of the needs of the organization and its

²⁵ Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 224.

members. Principals might avoid behavior which conveys the attitude that all decisions are made ultimately at the top echelons of the organization with little value being placed on input from all levels of the organization.

The data disclosed another finding regarding the attitudes of principals toward their informal communication systems. The attitudes of principals toward their teachers' associations appeared to be a factor in the overall attitudes of principals toward their grapevines. These principals stated that teachers do not really want to unite, but are forced to unite because of board actions. These attitudes convey that there is a power struggle between the teachers' association and the board of education. The implied view of the principals is that the association uses its grapevine to keep in contact with its members so that the association can discover when and where there is an opportunity to gain more power.

Based on this implication, it would seem appropriate for principals to direct the focus of the organization on its purposes rather than on external non-goal oriented concerns such as the power of the teachers' association. By focusing on organizational goals, the loyalties of various informal and quasi-formal groups can be redirected to the satisfaction growing out of goal accomplishment rather than satisfaction based upon loyalty to a particular informal group. Through the process of goal identification and focus

as a means of managing the tensions associated with organizational life, organizational members might also be able to resolve their individual needs. Principals might be able to mediate between placing undue emphasis on organizational goals over the informal needs of organizational members and members who insist on total autonomy regardless of organizational needs.

Data indicated that the attitudes of principals concerning their informal communication systems was not dependent on the leadership behavior of principals. Therefore, a statement cannot be made which links the attitudes of principals towards their informal communication systems with the Situational Leadership Theory.

Davis, in the related literature, predicted the findings of this hypothesis. Davis delineated varying degrees of attitudes regarding the grapevine. At one end, Davis foresaw the attitude that the grapevine is evil and challenges authority. At the other end, the grapevine is viewed as good because it acts as a safety valve.²⁶ The data provided evidence that the attitudes of principals in this study are congruent with those predicted by Davis.

One implication from the data of this study was that some principals viewed informal communication systems as actually or potentially dangerous to their prerogatives. Grapevines are difficult to control and must be contained.

²⁶Davis, "Management Communication," p. 43.

This implication is consistent with the conclusions of Bavelas and Barrett. They found that managers of organizations would prefer explicit and orderly communication lines rather than informal communication systems.²⁷ However, Huneryager and Heckman maintain that control of informal communication is dependent upon the human relations ability of the manager. If the grapevine is ignored it cannot be controlled. Control is possible only by listening to it, determining who its leaders are, and what information it transmits.²⁸ The implication for principals is that by following the suggestions of Huneryager and Heckman, principals might be able to plan intelligent actions that will ultimately lead to an integration of informal communication systems with the formal communication system.

Another implication from this study was that some principals were unaware of their informal communication systems because these systems were so well integrated into the formal structure that these systems did not appear to be functioning independently. This implication supports the position advanced by Griffiths in the related literature. Griffiths noted that the administrator can regard informal communication systems as instruments fully integrated with

²⁷Bavelas and Barrett, p. 367.

²⁸S.G. Huneryager and I.L. Heckman, Human Relations in Management (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1967), p. 513.

the formal policy-making function of his staff.²⁹

The moderate attitude expressed by the majority of principals in this study was that since the grapevine is a fact of organizational life, it should exist as positively as possible. This expressed attitude was more prevalent among principals in this study than the findings of Newstrom, Monczka and Reif would suggest. Their study found that twenty-seven percent of their sample group considered their grapevines to be considerably positive in their work context, while thirty-eight percent considered the grapevine to be essentially neutral.³⁰ The difference in the findings between this study and Newstrom's can be attributed to the size of the work group. While the average work group of principals in this study was fifteen teachers, Newstrom surveyed managers of work groups of varying sizes. As one of the conclusions of Newstrom, Monczka, and Reif, they found that small units of organizations (1-49 people) generally viewed the grapevine as more valuable than the larger units.³¹

²⁹ Daniel E. Griffiths, David L. Clark, D. Richard Wynn, and Lawrence Iannaccone, Organizing Schools for Effective Education (Danville, Ill. The Interstate Printer & Publisher, Inc., 1962), p. 257.

³⁰ John W. Newstrom, Robert E. Monczka, and William E. Reif, "Perceptions of Grapevine: Its Value and Influence," The Journal of Business Communication 11 (Spring 1974), p. 13.

³¹ Ibid., p. 19.

Summary of Hypothesis Three

Based on Situational Leadership Theory, it was expected that principals in each quadrant would display differing attitudes toward their informal communication systems. It was expected that Quadrant I (high task/low relationship) principals would view informal grapevines as actually or potentially dangerous to their prerogatives because of their directive nature. It was expected that Quadrant I (high relationship/high task) principals would view their grapevines as a device they could use to get their staffs to psychologically accept organizational goals. It was expected that Quadrant III (high relationship/low task) principals would view their grapevine as a conduit of two-way communication and facilitating behavior from these principals since the staff has the ability and knowledge to perform the assigned tasks. It was expected that Quadrant IV (low task/low relationship) principals would view their grapevines as a modus operandi for maintaining a positive atmosphere and general supervision, since the staff is high in task and psychological maturity.

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered relevant to this hypothesis did not support these expectations. There was little indication that a differentiation concerning the attitudes of principals toward their informal communication systems can be made on the basis of the leadership behavior of principals as determined by the LEAD

instruments.

The major implication for this hypothesis is that principals must accept the potential complementarity of the informal communication system in the process of achieving the goals of the organization and its members. This synergic relationship can be enhanced by principals actively including the grapevine into the more formalized structure. Principals might avoid behavior which conveys the attitude that all decisions are made ultimately at the top echelons of the organization with little value being placed on input from all levels of the organization.

Thus, Hypothesis Three is not rejected based on the findings.

Hypothesis Four

There is no significant relationship between the placement of principals in the quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid of Hersey and Blanchard and the position held by the key communicators of the informal communication systems of these principals.

Key communicators are influential indigenous leaders who exist in any informal communication system. They are dependable people whose believability has been demonstrated by their past communication performances. The need of organizational members to know remains unsatisfied if they constantly rely on key communicators who consistently transmit unreliable, inaccurate information. Management makes the most effective use of these people by recognizing their needs and satisfying them. In this way, management gets their key communicators to accept organizational goals and in turn influence others to do likewise. Enlisting key communicators in the process of influencing others for the attainment of organizational goals assists in the guarantee that independent communication networks do not materialize around key communicators. This would threaten the power, position and prerogatives of management.³²

Quantitative Data and Analysis

The following item on the questionnaire "Informal Communication in Organization" sought to determine the

³²Don Bagin, "Key Communicators--An Authorized Grapevine," in The Public Relations Almanac For Educators (Camp Hill, Pa.: Educational Communication Center, 1980), p. 46.

relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and the position held by the key communicators of the informal communication systems of these principals. The written questionnaire was completed by the forty principals who comprise the sample for this phase of the study.

Please give the title or position of the person whom you consider to be the key communicator of your informal communication system. (Note: This person does not have to be a school employee)

Position/Title _____

(s)he is my

superior _____

subordinate _____

peer-other at my job level _____

Table 17 shows the compilation of the data for this question.

Table 17

Number of Principal-Selected Key Communicators
by Position in Organization

	HiTask LoRel.	HiRel. HiTask	HiRel. LoTask	LoTask LoRel.
Superiors	7	5	2	1
Peers	2	3	2	0
Subordinates Teachers Secretaries	0 } 1 1 }	1 } 2 1 }	4 } 6 2 }	6 } 9 3 }

N=40

Because of sample size, it was necessary to collapse the data into the following in order to test for significance.

Table 18

Number of Principal-Selected Key Communicators

	Hi Task Lo Rel.	Hi Rel. Hi Task	Hi Rel. Lo Task	Lo Task Lo Rel.
Fellow administrators	9	8	4	1
Staff	1	2	6	9

The chi square statistic was applied to these data resulting in $\chi^2=16.57$ which is significant beyond the .01 level of significance.

These data indicate that high task (QI and II) principals designated their superiors in the organization (e.g. superintendents, assistant superintendents, supervisors, etc.) more often than any other position. In only one instance did a Quadrant I principal name a key communicator who was not an administrator. This finding is consistent with earlier results which implied that these principals are more comfortable when communicating with other administrators. As each quadrant is, in turn, inspected the number of superiors chosen as key communicators decreased while the number of subordinates (teachers and secretaries) chosen as key communicators increased. In only one instance did a Quadrant IV principal select an administrator as a key communicator. The selection of administrators as key communicators implies, and is corroborated by data from the interviews, that principals who selected superiors felt that they receive more valuable information from these sources;

this information was of more use to them in administrating their buildings.

Based upon the quantitative data relevant to this hypothesis, Hypothesis Four is rejected.

Qualitative Data and Analysis

Although it is possible to differentiate between the position held by a key communicator by assessing the leadership behavior of the principal, principals, regardless of quadrant placement, expressed in the interviews essentially the same rationale for selecting their key communicators. Some of these rationale follows:

1. Superiors--principals in the interview sample named their superintendent or other central office personnel because as one principal stated, "Almost any information necessary to my functioning in this position comes from by boss."

2. Peers--Principals in the interview sample named fellow principals as key communicators because they viewed these individuals as knowing everything that was occurring in the district. Usually, these principals-key communicators had been in the district much longer than the interviewed principals and were thought to be much closer to the central office administration. The implication for choosing peers rather than superiors is that these principals found it easier to contact fellow principals and ask about "hot" information on the grapevine. Fellow principals were only

too happy to oblige them in passing on what they had heard from their grapevine sources. Calling the central office to inquire about such information made interviewed principals uncomfortable; they were less willing to discuss unsubstantiated information with superiors.

3. Subordinates--Teachers--the teachers chosen by principals in the interview sample can be classified into two categories: classroom teachers and special teachers such as reading teachers, learning disability teachers, physical education teachers and learning center directors (who are classified as teachers). Classroom teachers were selected because they are respected by the principal and the staff. These teachers were seen as knowledgeable, sensible, credible, sincere, open, frank, organized, interested in the school and high professional. They were also flexible people who give 110 percent to their jobs. As one principal commented about his key communicator, "If there's a problem she's there and if she has a complaint, instead of complaining about it in the teacher's lounge, she comes into the office with it. Although we don't always agree, I know right where I stand with her." Special teachers were chosen because

a. they have contact with every teacher in the school in the content of their jobs and they work closely with their principals.

b. their work sites are centrally located.

c. their personality. Each possesses leadership qualities which was a factor in their selection for their jobs.

4. Secretaries-- interviewed principals who selected their secretaries as their key communicators did so because the secretaries do not speak for themselves; they are extensions of their principals. Such secretaries speak only upon the direction of their principals; they are very loyal and understand their role as assistants to the principal. The secretaries communicate the ideas of the principals; they relay information. Because of their close physical proximity to the principal, they are the first to field teacher and parental inquiries. When a principal is absent from the building, it is the secretary who must put herself into the mind of the principal, dispose of the incident as he would wish and inform him of what occurred in his absence.

When the key communicators were asked the rationale behind their selection, they were knowledgeable as to the reason they were selected. In addition to agreeing with the assessment of their principals concerning the reason they were selected, several classified themselves as the "biggest mouth" in the school. Each is unafraid to go into the principal and ask what is occurring. Each saw themselves as willing to help out and give of their time. They saw themselves as objective and open minded people who are willing to accept suggestions and ideas. But once a decision has been reached their dissension ends. None are interested in carrying idle gossip.

All low task (QIII and QIV) principals viewed their key communicators as quite influential. As one commented, "Aside from myself, she (a teacher) is the most powerful person in the building. Powerful in terms of the kind of influence she exerts with other staff members. Some teachers don't like her personally, but they listen to her because she is sharp and she does know what she's talking about." Other principals expressed similar comments that their staffs are more receptive and responsive to key communicators; the staff turns to key communicators for approval. For the most part, these principals do listen to their key communicators, although they do not always follow their advice. This has sometimes led to clashes with the resultant effect that organizational goals are not always achieved.

A distinction can be made on the use by principals of their key communicators. This distinction is consistent with data mentioned earlier for Hypothesis Two. High task principals do not consciously go to their key communicators to have them transmit information to others. Principals attempt to neutralize their key communicators by going directly to the staff when they want information conveyed. Subordinates were named key communicators because they pass information to the principals that they think he should be aware of. These key communicators are not asked for information by teachers because they have been given none to

transmit. They also have the reputation of not passing information on unless, in rare instances, they have been asked to by the principal. A principal stated that using his key communicator would be a manipulative tool--one he did not choose to use. He would rather go directly to his staff. Yet, his key communicator stated that this principal sets the stage before he goes to the staff if he thinks he is going to get an argument; he makes it almost impossible for the teachers to not accept what he wants them to do.

On the other hand, low task principals do make use of their key communicators. Such principals discuss issues with their key communicators to assess how other staff members will receive the information. In the discussion, the principal always tells his key communicator whether it is for publication or not. If it is for publication, he knows it is very likely that the key communicator will let others know about it. And, the key communicator then provides the principal with valuable feedback. Principals took pride in being able to assess the attitudes of their key communicators concerning an issue before they stimulated them.

Key communicators of low task principals viewed their function as key communicators in much the same light. They viewed informal communication as a two-way street. If the principal thinks something is happening, he will go to the key communicator and ask, "What's up?" Conversely, the key communicators have no inhibitions either in going to the

principal and asking him the same question or telling him that something is happening and he should be prepared for it. In addition, these key communicators viewed themselves as middlemen, in some situations, between principals and staff. Often, the staff used them as their key communicators. If something is bothering the staff, they go to the key communicator, tell her and know that she will go in to tell the principal. The staff knows that the key communicator will see the principal and not give any names. Principals are aware that the staff uses the key communicator in this manner.

Because principals have formal authority in the organization, they normally have access to more information than their staff. Data from the interviews indicated that seventy-five percent of high task/low relationship (QI) principals remarked that their staffs attempt to glean information informally from them. This percentage also applies to high relationship/high task (QIII) principals. For high relationship/low task (QIII) principals, fifty percent of principals said that their staffs attempt to glean information from them. None (zero percent) of the low task/low relationship principals commented that their teachers tried to obtain information from them before they are ready to convey it.

Principals identified as high task (QI and QII) proposed several reasons why their staffs come to them for

information. Two of these principals are new in their buildings and admitted that their staffs come to them because they are new. The principals make slips of the tongue and teachers pick up on these slips fairly frequently. New principals sometimes leak information because the principal knows something and they do not realize that it is a piece of the whole situation that somebody should not have. The implication is that teachers take advantage of these principals to gain information to increase their knowledge in order to plan strategies which would benefit them.

Other principals in these quadrants commented that the staff frequently comes to them seeking information. Principals said that their staffs constantly ask the same questions in a number of different ways, every day. The attitude of these principals toward their staffs seeking information from them was expressed by a principal who stated, "Above board teachers come in and ask for information. Sneaky teachers don't; they try to get the information from teachers who have come in and asked me." As indicated previously, if the timing is right, these principals release the information; if not their comment is "I know, but I'm not ready to tell you."

One-half of the high relationship/low task interviewed principals stated that their staffs do come to them for information. The interview data can be interpreted that

these principals viewed the approach by their staffs as an attempt by the teachers to obtain a commitment from someone in authority who has power to grant their requests. Or, if the principal does not have the power, the staff uses him as a testing device to see if a higher authority will grant the request. The other half of the principals in the quadrant commented that they have to initiate any communication between themselves and their staffs. These two principals felt that they are approachable personalities, but they have not yet cultivated the level of maturity in their staffs necessary for their staffs to initiate communication.

Low task/low relationship principals think that none of their staffs comes in to obtain information. These principals reason that this is the case because they attempt to tell their staffs as much as possible as soon as possible. These principals attempt to prepare the staff for what may be coming. This approach takes some of the pressure off of the staff. As one principal commented, "By anticipating the kinds of concerns the staff will have as professionals and the situations they'll be working with, I try to provide them with pertinent information which leaves my staff with little opportunity to wonder and gossip."

The qualitative data pertaining to Hypothesis Four provided the rationale behind the selection of key communicators by principals and helped explain why the results of the quantitative analysis occurred as they did. Although

selection of key communicators can be predicated on the leadership behavior of principals, the explanations for these selections were dependent on the position held by the key communicators in the organization. Thus, one division on which the qualitative data was based was the position of the key communicators. Taken together, the qualitative and quantitative data provide the basis upon which Hypothesis Four is rejected.

Implications of Findings for Hypothesis Four

Data analyzed for Hypothesis Four provided evidence that the leadership behavior of principals is related to the position of key communicator of the informal communication system of the principal.

High task (QI and QII) principals chose fellow administrators as their key communicators. The data suggest that these principals are most comfortable in communicating with people who operate in similar circumstances, share a commonality of purpose and have comradery. Such principals think that they need any and all information they can obtain in order to protect their prerogatives. The implication for choosing fellow administrators is that the selected administrators were thought to have more information or more access to information than the principals in the sample for the study.

Low task (QIII and IV) principals expressed less need for control over informal communication. These princi-

pals attempted to provide all necessary information to allow the staff to operate as independently as possible. Such behavior implies that principals view teachers as professionals whose contributions are as important as their own in achieving organizational goals.

The data further imply that most of the key communicators, who were subordinates, of high task principals were more passive individuals than key communicators of low task principals. Key communicators of high task principals were directed more in their activities on the grapevine by their principals than key communicators of low task principals. The passivity of subordinate key communicators of high task principals means that the principals identified people as key communicators who were individuals who were submissive to the directions of the principals. Apparently high task principals gravitate to those individuals who allow themselves to be utilized. Key communicators may allow themselves to be used out of loyalty to the organization, loyalty to the principal, or because their ego structure permits direction.

The data suggested that key communicators of low task principals were more aggressive than those of high task principals. Every teacher identified as a key communicator encouraged other teachers to be more vocal and to make more approaches to their principals. The aggressiveness of these key communicators means that these principals tended to

identify individuals whose ego-structure demanded that they work in partnership with their principals and not as individuals whose every activity was choreographed by the principal.

An observation concerning the data is that no one outside the organization was chosen as a key communicator. The written questionnaire did not limit the choice of key communicators to organizational members. Evidently, principals believed that no useful information could come from sources not intimately involved with the routine operation of the organization.

One final observation concerning the data is that in no instance did any principal select the association representative of his building as his key communicator. Comments by key communicators who were teachers indicated that association representatives were very important to the functioning of the informal communication systems of teachers. The non-selection of representatives implies that principals, cognizant of the importance of the representatives, choose not to enhance this importance by communicating with them more than they would a regular staff member.

Based upon these implications it would seem advisable for principals to determine whom their staff identifies as the key communicator of their grapevine. If the choice of the staff is different from the person selected by the principal, the principal could analyze this incongruence for

the purpose of reconciling his viewpoint with that of the staff. Synergic action between the formal and informal organization is improbable unless the leadership selected by the staff identifies with the efforts of the organization. If the principal does not reconcile the dual identification of key communicators, the productivity level of the organization might be jeopardized because the possibility exists of an independent network operating outside the control of the principal.

Another implication of the findings is that the principal could convey his attitude of the importance of the contributions of organizational members whether formally or informally initiated. Organizational members desire recognition for their efforts by representatives of both the formal and informal organization. Principals can treat their staffs as important contributors toward the accomplishment of goals and objectives. A further implication is that by giving recognition to the staff, the principal facilitates the movement of the attitudes of the staff towards a sense of identification with organizational activities whether formally or informally performed. Giving recognition to the staff can be an effective means of increasing output.

Quadrant I principals direct all information towards themselves, while Quadrant II principals control information to the extent that information is directed to

the principal from the key communicator. Principals then utilize this information to persuade their staffs to accept organizational goals. These behaviors identified in the study are in accordance with Situational Leadership Theory which depicts Quadrant I principals as directive and Quadrant II principals as persuasive.³³

Staffs that have reached the maturity level associated with Quadrant III principal leadership behavior need the principal to be available, if needed, to act as a facilitator in the decision-making process. Staffs that have reached the maturity level associated with Quadrant IV principals derive their own solutions to concerns once the limits have been defined by the principal. These behaviors identified in the study are congruent with Situational Leadership Theory which depicts Quadrant III principals as exhibiting facilitating behavior and Quadrant IV principals as allowing their staffs to maintain independence.³⁴

All key communicators selected by principals in this study were chosen because of their accurate and reliable past communication records. This choice of key communicators attests to statements reported in the literature regarding selection of key communicators. For instance,

³³Hersey and Blanchard, p. 168.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 169-170.

Davis wrote that the communication of facts is more effective if it comes from a source which employees think is in a position to know the true facts. The source should be a person who is dependable and believable in terms of his past communication record.³⁵

The rationale behind the selection of key communicators by principals expressed in this study is consistent with the findings reported in the related literature. Secretaries were chosen as key communicators because of their close physical proximity and their position as assistant to the principal. Kennedy wrote that secretaries are strategically located as communication centers. The manager may depend on his secretary to take the pulse of the organization.³⁶ Fellow administrators were chosen by principals because they were thought to have access to more information than the principals in the study. According to Mandel and Hellweg, information flows horizontally. Individuals spread information to others who occupy the same working level in the organization. Thus, their study suggest that managers communicate information to other managers.³⁷

³⁵Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 230.

³⁶Kennedy, p. 52.

³⁷Jerry E. Mandel and Susan A. Hellweg, "Understanding and Influencing the Informal Communication System in the University," The Journal of the College and University Personnel Association 28 (May 1977), p. 52.

The data suggest that other positions named by the principals, notably classroom teachers, were chosen because of the individual involved and not the position of the individual. These data imply that the personality of the individual is a factor in determining whether that individual becomes active on the grapevine. However, Davis insisted that the informal communication system is more a product of the situation than it is of the person.³⁸ This view does not preclude the personality of the individual in playing a role on the grapevine. The data suggest that, evidently, the climate provided by low task principals produces situations in which individuals with dynamic personalities emerge as indigenous leaders who influence other organizational members.

The related literature provided the viewpoints of researchers on the issue of whether managers can be key communicators on their informal communication systems. Walton³⁹, Knippen⁴⁰, and Saltonstall⁴¹ are among authors who believe that managers are the key link in the communication

³⁸ Davis, Human Relations at Work, p. 230.

³⁹ Eugene Walton, "Communicating Down the Line: How They Really Get the Word," Personnel 36 (July-August 1959), p. 79.

⁴⁰ Jay T. Knippen, "Grapevine Communication: Management and Employees," Journal of Business Research 2 (January 1974), p. 51.

⁴¹ Robert Saltonstall, Human Relation in Administration (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), p. 359-360.

chain. Managers are in positions to filter employee attitudes and ideas that get to upper management. Also formal communications, decisions, policies and instructions should all filter through the manager on their way down to employees.

On the other hand, Griffiths insisted that it is virtually impossible for a principal to be a leader in the informal organization. As formal leader in a school, the principal must treat his subordinates as equally as possible. The principal cannot protect the individual from sanctions of the informal group if he is controlled by the norms of that group.⁴²

The findings of this study provide evidence which supports the position that principals act as influentials on their grapevines. High task principals intentionally intervene on their grapevines to influence organizational members to perform in a manner to which the principal subscribes. Teachers approach the principal to glean information. The predominant use of their grapevines by low task principals is to communicate with their teachers. This use provides these principals with opportunities to persuade teachers to function in a manner consistent with organizational goals.

Summary of Hypothesis Four

On the basis of the leadership behavior of princi-

⁴²Griffiths, p. 270.

pals it is possible to discern the position held by the key communicators of the informal communication systems of these principals. High task principals chose fellow administrators as their key communicators. This is evidently the case because administrators share a commonality of purpose, operate in similar circumstances, and have comradery. Quadrant I principals were more aggressive in seeking information from their key communicators than Quadrant II principals. The few subordinate key communicators of high task principals were controlled in their activities on the grapevine by their principals.

Low task principals anticipate the concerns of the staff so that there is little opportunity for the development of an overly active communication system around the key communicator. Principals and key communicators enjoy a symbiotic relationship which enriches the climate of the school enabling the principals and staff to work together to the extent permissible by the maturity level of the staff. These principals made more use of two way communication in an effort to involve their staffs in the satisfaction of their own needs and the attainment of organizational goals. Key communicators work with these principals as professionals to urge the staff to become more involved in expressing their concerns and in sharing in the decision-making process.

A major implication for this hypothesis is that the

principal could convey his attitude of the importance of the contributions of organizational members whether formally or informally initiated. By giving recognition to the staff, the principal facilitates the movement of the attitudes of the staff towards a sense of identification with organizational activities whether formally or informally performed.

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered relevant to this hypothesis indicated that a differentiation concerning the position held by the key communicators of the informal communication systems of principals can be made on the basis of the leadership behavior of principals as determined by the LEAD instruments.

Thus, Hypothesis Four is rejected based upon the findings.

Summary

Chapter IV presented data gathered from written questionnaire and interviews conducted with principals and principals-selected key communicators. The chapter was divided into sections which corresponded to the four hypotheses of the study. Each section was further divided into subsections. These subsections contained the quantitative data gathered by the written questionnaires, the qualitative data gathered from the interviews, and a subsection which integrated these data into a narrative which delineated the implications of the data. Tables and figures were depicted where appropriate in the quantitative subsections. Data were analyzed as they related to The Situational Leadership Theory of Hersey and Blanchard. Findings were analyzed to provide answers to the basic question proposed for this study: What is the relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and the manner in which their informal communication systems function?

The findings related to the null hypotheses developed from the basic question demonstrated that (1) there is a significant relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and the level of activity on their informal communication systems; (2) there is a significant relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and the uses by principals of their informal communication systems; (3) there is no significant relationship between the leader-

ship behavior of principals and the attitudes of principals toward their informal communication systems; and, (4) there is a significant relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and the position held by the key communicators of their informal communication systems.

Conclusions and recommendations resulting from the analysis of the data will be presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter of the study contains a restatement of the theoretical framework presented in earlier chapters concerning the relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and the functioning of their informal communication systems. Also included is a summary of the research design and data treatment developed for this study. Based upon the analysis of the data related to the basic question of the study, conclusions are presented. Recommendations for further research concerning informal communication systems will conclude this final chapter.

Summary of the Study

This study was concerned with the relationship which exists between the leadership behavior of principals and the manner in which their informal communication systems function. From this basic topic, four questions were proposed:

1. What is the relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and the level of activity on their informal communication systems?
2. What is the relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and their uses of their informal

communication systems?

3. What is the relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and their attitudes toward their informal communication systems?

4. What is the relationship between the leadership behavior of principals and the position held by the key communicators of their informal communication systems?

Null hypotheses were developed from each of these questions.

The population for the study consisted of the current elementary principals in south Cook County. In order to obviate the variable of school enrollment, the principals in the population were divided into two categories. The main population of this study consisted of the elementary principals whose school enrollment lies between 201-500 students. The secondary population consisted of elementary principals whose school enrollment lies between 101-200 or 501-700 students. Data utilized in this study for principals in Quadrants I, II, and III of the Situational Leadership grid was provided by principals in the main population. Because the main population did not provide a sufficient number of cooperative principals for Quadrant IV, data was provided by two principals in the secondary population.

The Situational Leadership Theory of Hersey and Blanchard was selected as the theoretical framework for this study. Situational Leadership Theory is based upon the

curvilinear relationship between three variables: (1) the amount of direction (task behavior) a leader provides; (2) the amount of socio-emotional support (relationship behavior) a leader provides; and (3) the perceived maturity level of the follower(s) on a specific task, function, or objective that the leader is attempting to accomplish. The emphasis in Situational Leadership Theory is on the behavior of the leader in relation to followers.

Through use of the LEAD instruments, which are standardized questionnaires based on the Situational Leadership Theory, the leadership behavior of principals was determined for principals in the target population. Based upon the results of the LEAD instrument, each principal was placed into the appropriate leadership behavior quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid (Figure 5). The leadership behavior of the principal is in the quadrant where he made the most responses.

Using a table of random numbers, ten principals from each quadrant were randomly selected to achieve a sample for further study. These principals completed Questionnaire II, "Informal Communication in Organizations." This questionnaire was designed to assess selected aspects of informal communication in organizations and aspects of interpersonal relations thought to influence organizational communication.

Using a table of random numbers, four out of ten principals from each leadership behavior quadrant were

randomly selected from those principals who completed Questionnaire II to achieve the interview sample.

Principals, who were interviewed, arranged for interviews with their corresponding key communicators. In addition to the interviews, key communicators also completed the LEAD-other, a standardized instrument comparable to the LEAD-self completed by principals. The findings of the LEAD instruments indicate a high degree of association between the results of the principals and their key communicators.

The placement of the sample population into the appropriate quadrants of the Situational Leadership grid, the means of the responses of principals, when tabulated for each item of Questionnaire II, and the interviews of the sample population and their corresponding key communicators provided the data which formed the basis for testing the four hypotheses which resulted from the basic proposition of this study. Statistical procedures including analysis of variance, the Newman-Keuls procedure, and chi square were utilized where appropriate. The statistical procedures, when applied to the data, provided a means of determining statistically significant relationships between the identified variables contained in the instrumentation for the study.

The quantitative data obtained in this study led to the finding that the level of informal communication activity is greatest in schools led by high task/low

relationship (QI) principals. Informal communication activity decreases as the curvilinear relationship (Figure 5) progresses through the Situational Leadership grid so that the level of grapevine activity is lowest in schools led by low task/low relationship (QIV) principals. The data indicated that during a typical week, grapevines in schools led by Quadrant I principals were twice as active as grapevines in schools led by Quadrant IV principals. Grapevines of schools led by Quadrant II and III principals fell along this continuum. This finding reinforces previous research that all groups have the need for social interaction and the need to know. If the formal organization, represented at the building level by the principals, does not provide for these needs, the informal structure will accommodate organizational members by attempting to fulfill these needs. If sufficient information and interaction is not being provided through formal channels, informal communication systems are used by organizational members in an attempt to gain information and satisfy their social needs.

Other factors which also have an effect on the level of informal communication activity are: the superintendent and his leadership style, board of education visibility, activism of parental organizations and the strength of the teachers' association in the district. The actions of each generate information which is carried on communication channels.

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered for this study led to the finding that uses of informal communication systems by principals vary along a continuum ranging from one end, the principal directs who receives and/or sends information--to the other end, principal and/or staff sends and/or receives information. In terms of quantity of time, principals communicate informally with their staffs. This is due to close physical proximity between principal and staff. In terms of quality of information, principals communicate informally with fellow administrators.

The literature relevant to this study led to the finding that informal communication systems are a fact of life in any organization; it is important that they exist as positively as possible. The majority of principals studied realized the potential complementarity of their informal communication systems in the process of achieving the goals and objective for which the organization exists. These principals facilitate this complementarity between the organization and its grapevines by including their informal communication systems in the more formalized structural scheme. The majority opinion of principals seemed to be that if conditions are good, and pay raises are average in comparison to comparable districts, then teachers are not actively involved on their grapevines.

Without informal communication systems, principals believed that they would have to work harder in communicat-

ing. Tasks would be completed, but would take longer to accomplish. All principals believed in the necessity of transmitting in writing all official organizational information which comes from the board of education and/or the superintendent. Quantitative data indicated that informal communication systems are increasingly used as carriers of organizational information as each succeeding quadrant of the Situational Leadership grid is inspected. Each succeeding quadrant of principals believe that grapevines carry information necessary for the attainment of organizational goals and the satisfaction of individuals needs.

Although the majority of principals realize the efficacy of informal communication systems, the quantitative and qualitative data revealed that a range of attitudes concerning grapevines existed among principals. On one end are principals who eschew the legitimacy of informal communication systems for transmitting organizational information and relegate them to conduits for influencing interpersonal relations. In this view, any communication which bypasses the principal, as the teachers' grapevine has the potential to do, is undesirable and must be contained. On the other end of the continuum are principals who view informal communication systems as integral components of any organizations. Grapevines are necessary in the translation of organizational information. In this view, grapevines are a necessary element for encouraging staff cohesiveness and

interpreting institutional needs.

The quantitative data collected for this study led to the observation that administrators were chosen as key communicators by high task/low relationship (Q1) principals in all but one instance. As each leadership behavior quadrant is, in turn, inspected the number of administrators chosen as key communicators decreased while the number of subordinates chosen as key communicators increased. So, that in Quadrant IV, only one administrator was selected by a principal as a key communicator.

Conclusions

Based on the data gathered for this study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. The level of informal communication activity is directionally related to the leadership behavior of principals. This synergic relationship is consistent throughout the Situational Leadership grid. The manner in which organizational members behave on their grapevine reflects the reactions of members to their experiences with the amount of consideration on the part of the organization.

2. The uses by principals of their informal communication systems is concordantly related to the leadership behavior of principals. This harmonious relationship is consistent throughout the Situational Leadership grid. The uses principals make of their grapevines mirror their impressions concerning the functioning and purposes of their

informal communication systems.

3. The attitudes of principals toward their informal communication systems is independent of the leadership behavior of principals. There was no consistency in this relationship throughout the Situational Leadership grid. The attitudes of principals toward their grapevines is not contingent on how principals view their leadership behavior.

4. The position held by the key communicator of an informal communication system is intimately related to the leadership behavior of principals. This interdependent relationship is consistent throughout the Situational Leadership grid.

5. Key communicators of informal communication systems were not necessarily determined by age, sex, educational background, or teaching experience. However, most superior or peer key communicators selected were men and all subordinate key communicators selected were women. This finding resulted from the preponderance of these sexes in administration and the teaching profession.

6. Principals who measured high in either task or relationship behavior on the LEAD instrument were considered to be informal influentials by themselves and their significant others.

7. When the informal communication system is relatively integrated into the formal organization, organiza-

tional members tend to follow the goals which are appropriate for both the institution and themselves. These goals reflect positive structural-interpersonal dimensions and composition.

8. When the informal communication system is not in synchronization with the formal organization, organizational members strive for goals appropriate to their needs.

Members attempt to compensate for structural-interpersonal shortcomings in their own way. Members do not follow the goals of the organization.

Recommendations

As a result of the completion of this study, some recommendations can be made:

1. The principal needs to examine the functional and dysfunctional aspects of his informal communication system as it relates to his school organization with a view towards maximizing the positive effects and minimizing the negative effects of the grapevine.

2. The principal should recognize the importance of social interaction to his position. One of the most important functions of any administrative position may well be social participation with staff members.

3. The principal should provide time and places for organizational members to gather informally in order to facilitate the functioning of interpersonal associations which can reinforce the operation of the staff.

4. The principal needs people with whom he can discuss school problems, receive specific help, and exchange thoughts. This need is not always fulfilled by contract with his superintendent or teachers. The superintendent should provide his principals with time and places to interact among themselves on a regular basis.

5. The principal should create a structure of interaction between organizational members which would be functional for any activity through the identification of individuals who are active on the informal communication system.

6. The principal should be cautious in the cultivation of his key communicators. If the principal gives his key communicators too much attention, other staff members might become jealous and resentful; too little attention, and the key communicators believe themselves unimportant and taken for granted.

7. The principal should mediate between his informal communication system and his school organization. Mediation is achieved by facilitating the transmission of information between these two structures. In so doing, the leader is better able to interpret the functional prerequisites of both structures leading to the satisfaction of institutional and individual needs.

8. Those principals who selected external key communicators should identify those individuals who are key com-

municators internal to the school. These principals need these individuals in order to facilitate communication within the school.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. The relationship of informal communication systems to aspects of the formal organization has not been a center of concern for students of organizational structure and behavior. Researchers have recognized that the formal organization represents only one aspect of the organizational environment and that there also exists an informal, extralegal side of organizational life. Research into the communication aspect of informal organizations has mainly been restricted to communication patterns found in the informal setting. This study attempted to broaden the scope of research into informal communication. Some writers share the belief that organizational goals are actually accomplished through informal associations and activities. A suggestion for further research, therefore, centers around the need to measure the effect of actively and passively involved informal communication systems in the organization.

2. This study dealt with only one aspect of the organizational environment, the leadership behavior of principals, and its relationship to informal communication systems. Therefore, further research should be done regarding the relationship between informal communication systems and other organizational variables. Among these variables

are: (1) student enrollment of the school district, (2) number of buildings in the school district, (3) the leadership behavior of superintendents, (4) student enrollment in a school, (5) administrative experience of the principals, (6) length of experience of a principal at a school, (7) the sex of the principal, and (8) the age of the principal.

3. Conversely, further research should be done into the leadership behavior of principals and its relationship to other aspects of informal communication systems. Among these aspects are communication patterns of informal communication systems and directionality of communication--upward, downward or horizontal.

4. Efforts could be made to expand the data gathering procedures to all levels in the educational organization. Data gathered for this study included only the elementary school level. The research methodology utilized in this study could be applied to the junior and senior high schools as a means of comparing results for each level. Insights into organizational similarities and differences between levels concerning leadership behavior of principals and informal communication systems could be gained through expanded research.

5. This study should be replicated in similar situations within other organizational settings. Other organizations which have similar bureaucratic characteristics as an ascribed leader in interaction with other

organizational members may be found in hospitals, the military, civil service and business institutions.

6. Additional research should be conducted which delineates the power relationships among informal leaders, teachers' associations, administrations, and boards of education. The relationship of informal communication systems to such power relationships can be investigated as a measure of the ability of the principals to recognize positive and negative consequences to his goals from such power relationships.

7. In view of the tentative nature of the findings for Hypothesis Two, more research is needed on the uses of informal communications by principals.

The potential of informal communication systems as being supportive or subvertive of the organization is documented in the literature. The management of this paradoxical potential of informal communication system will continue to challenge representatives of the formal organization. With careful cultivation by management, grapevines can be tools for the development of strategies designed to create a more harmonious, goal-oriented organizational climate which would also facilitate needs satisfaction for organizational members. Informal communication systems offer unlimited potential for contributing to the ultimate success of the organizations in which they exist.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Appendix A

LEAD Instrument

Assume YOU are involved in each of the following twelve situations. Read each item carefully. Think about what YOU would do in each circumstance. Then circle the letter of the alternative action choice that You think would most closely describe your behavior in the situation presented. Circle only one choice.

1. Your subordinates are no longer responding to your friendly conversation and obvious concern for their welfare. Their performance is declining rapidly.
 - a. Emphasize the use of uniform procedures and the necessity for task accomplishment.
 - b. Make yourself available for discussion, but don't push your involvement.
 - c. Talk with subordinates and then set goals.
 - d. Intentionally do not intervene.
2. The observable performance of your group is increasing. You have been making sure that all members are aware of their responsibilities and expected standards of performance.
 - a. Engage in friendly interaction, but continue to make sure that all members are aware of their responsibilities and expected standards of performance.
 - b. Take no definite action.
 - c. Do what you can to make the group feel important and involved.
 - d. Emphasize the importance of deadlines and tasks.
3. Members of your group are unable to solve a problem themselves. You have normally left them alone. Group performance and interpersonal relations have been good.
 - a. Work with the group and together engage in problem solving.
 - b. Let the group work it out.
 - c. Act quickly and firmly to correct and redirect.
 - d. Encourage group to work on problem and be supportive of their efforts.
4. You are considering a major change. Your subordinates have a fine record of accomplishment. They respect the need for change.
 - a. Allow group involvement in developing the change, but don't be too directive.

- b. Announce changes and then implement with close supervision.
 - c. Allow group to formulate its own direction.
 - d. Incorporate group recommendations, but you direct the change.
5. The performance of your group has been dropping during the last few months. Members have been unconcerned with meeting objectives. Redefining roles and responsibilities has helped in the past. They have continually needed reminding to have their tasks done on time.
- a. Allow group to formulate its own directions.
 - b. Incorporate group recommendations, but see that objectives are met.
 - c. Redefine roles and responsibilities and supervise carefully.
 - d. Allow group involvement in determining roles and responsibilities, but don't be too directive.
6. You stepped into an efficiently run organization, which the previous administrator tightly controlled. You want to maintain a productive situation, but would like to begin humanizing the environment.
- a. Do what you can to make group feel important and involved.
 - b. Emphasize the importance of deadlines and tasks.
 - c. Intentionally do not intervene.
 - d. Get group involved in decision making, but see that objective are met.
7. You are considering changing to a structure that will be new to your group. Members of the group have made suggestions about needed change. The group has been productive and demonstrated flexibility in its operations.
- a. Define the change and supervise carefully.
 - b. Participate with the group in developing the change but allow members to organize the implementation.
 - c. Be willing to make changes as recommended, but maintain control of implementation.
 - d. Avoid confrontation; leave things alone.
8. Group performance and interpersonal relations are good. You feel somewhat unsure about your lack of direction of the group.
- a. Leave the group alone.
 - b. Discuss the situation with the group and then you initiate necessary changes.
 - c. Take steps to direct subordinates toward working in a well-defined manner.
 - d. Be supportive in discussing the situation with the

group but not too directive.

9. Your superior has appointed you to head a task force that is far overdue in making requested recommendations for change. The group is not clear on its goals. Attendance at sessions has been poor. Their meetings have turned into social gatherings. Potentially they have the talent necessary to help.
 - a. Let the group work out its problems.
 - b. Incorporate group recommendations, but see that objectives are met.
 - c. Redefine roles and supervise carefully.
 - d. Allow group involvement in setting goals, but don't push.
10. Your subordinates, usually able to take responsibility, are not responding to your recent redefining of standards.
 - a. Allow group involvement in redefining standards, but do not take control.
 - b. Redefine standards and supervise carefully.
 - c. Avoid confrontation by not applying pressure; leave situation alone.
 - d. Incorporate group recommendations, but see that new standards are met.
11. You have been promoted to a new position. The previous supervisor was uninvolved in the affairs of the group. The group has adequately handled its tasks and directions. Group interrelations are good.
 - a. Take steps to direct subordinates toward working in a well-defined manner.
 - b. Involve subordinates in decision making and reinforce good contributions.
 - c. Discuss past performance with the group and then you examine the need for new practices.
 - d. Continue to leave group alone.
12. Recent information indicates some internal difficulties among subordinates. The group has a remarkable record of accomplishment. Members have effectively maintained long-range goals. They have worked in harmony for the past year. All are well qualified for the task.
 - a. Try out your solution with subordinates and examine the need for new practices.
 - b. Allow group members to work it out themselves.
 - c. Act quickly and firmly to correct and redirect.
 - d. Participate in problem discussion while providing support for subordinates.

Appendix B

Appendix B

Informal Communication in Organizations

This is a series of questions about how you use informal communication (including grapevines) at work.

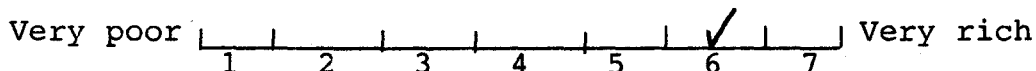
The formal communication system consists of memos, reports, house organs and official promulgations. It carries management's view of what is going on within the organization.

The informal communication system consists of people talking to one another in the course of the working day. This network carries rumors, trial balloons, and individual's perceptions of what participants think is going on.

Thus, the phrase on "an informal basis at work" indicates those occasions you spend communicating informally (sending up trial balloons, checking individual's perceptions, etc.) with those around you at work.

Imagine a typical week at work and answer the questions accordingly.

Some questions ask you to fill in an answer. On these questions, please check the point that represents most closely how you feel. For instance, to the question, "How rich do you want to be?" you might answer:



Please return this questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Of all the time you spend receiving information on an informal basis at work, about what percentage comes from: (total=100%)

immediate superiors____% subordinates____%
peers-others at you job level____%


2. Of the times you spend sending information on an informal basis at work, about what percentage goes to:
(total=100%)

immediate superiors____% subordinates____%
peers-others at your job level____%

3. Of the times you engage in informal communication while on the job, about what percentage of the time do you use the following methods to communicate: (total=100%)


face-to-face _____ % telephone _____ %

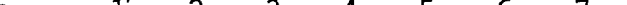
4. When receiving information on an informal basis from the sources listed below, how accurate would you estimate it usually is:

A. Completely accurate  Completely inaccurate

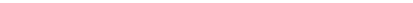
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

immediate superiors

B. Completely accurate  Completely inaccurate

C. Completely accurate  Completely inaccurate
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
peers-others at your job level

5. Do you ever feel that you receive more information on an informal basis than you can effectively use?

Never  Always

6. In a typical work week, approximately how often do you have less than an adequate amount of information for making the best possible work-related decisions?

0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10 10+

7. In a typical work week when transmitting information on an informal basis to the following people, about how many times do you expand it by discussing in greater detail some aspects of the information?

A.

0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	10+	

to immediate superiors

B.

0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	10+	

to subordinates

C.

0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	10+	

to peers-others at your job level

8. Of all the information you receive on an informal basis at work, about how much do you pass on to:

A. All

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

 None
immediate superiors

B. All

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

 None
subordinates

C. All

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

 None
peers-others at your job level

9. How desirable do you feel it is in your job to interact frequently on an informal basis with:

A. Very

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

 Very
desirable immediate superiors undesirable

B. Very

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

 Very
desirable subordinates undesirable

C. Very

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

 Very
desirable peers-others at your job level undesirable

10. While at work, we often receive the same information (such as directives, statements of policy, changes in regulations, requests for reports, etc.) from different sources. About how many times during a typical week

do you receive information from your grapevine from different sources?

0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10 10+

11. It is often necessary in our jobs not to pass to others some of the information which comes to us. About how many times during a typical week do you withhold from the following people information which might be useful to them?

A. 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10 10+
immediate superiors

B. 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10 10+
subordinates

C. 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10 10+
peers-others at your job level

12. We often find it necessary to change the nature of information (e.g. use different words, shift emphasis, simplify, etc.) we pass to others in our organizations. Of all the information you receive on an informal basis, how much of it must you actively change in some way before you pass it on to the following people:

A. A small amount 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A large amount
immediate superiors

B. A small amount 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A large amount
subordinates

C. A small amount 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A large amount
peers-others at your job level

13. How free do you feel to engage in informal discussions with your immediate superior about the problems and difficulties you have in your job without jeopardizing your position or having it "held against" you later?

Completely free 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very cautious

14. In a typical work week, about how many times does the informal communication system of your school regularly disseminate organizational (as opposed to social)

information to the staff? (Here organizational information refers to information concerning the operation of the organization such as directives, statements of policy, job changes, changes in regulations, reports, etc. Social information is personal information such as family matters, personal (private) relationships, etc.)

| | | | | | |
 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10 10+

15. Do you view the informal communication system as a legitimate means of communication?

Generally | | | | | | | Seldom
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. Do you view the informal communication system as a valuable means of communication?

Generally | | | | | | | Seldom
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. Please give the title or position of the person whom you consider to be the key communicator of your informal communication system. (Note: this person does not have to be a school employee)

Position/Title _____

If this person is a school employee:

(s)he is my

superior _____

subordinate _____

peer-other at my job level _____

Please feel free to make any additional comments about your behavior towards your informal communication system.

Appendix C

Interview Instrument

"Assessing Informal Communication in Organizations"

Principals' Form

Appendix C

"Assessing Informal Communication in
Organizations--Principals' Form"

1. What do you think is the primary function of your informal communication system? (For example, does it mainly spread rumors, act as a safety valve, carry news fast?) Why do you think your grapevine functions as it does?
2. During which situations do you feel that your informal communication system is most active? least active? Would you describe an incident when your informal communication system was most active? Why do you feel that this incident caused your informal communication system to become overly active?
3. Do you feel that there are instances when information is best disseminated informally rather than through formal channels? When? Why do you feel this way? Could you describe such an instance when information would have best been disseminated informally, but was disseminated through formal channels? (or vice versa)
4. How do you utilize the information you receive from your district's informal communication system? From your school's informal communication system? For instance, do you ignore it? If so, why do you ignore this information? As another example, do you use the system to assess the feelings of the staff? Why do you find this approach superior/inferior to other methods of trying to assess the staff's emotional well-being?
5. On the questionnaire, you identified your (position) as your key communicator. Would you explain why you consider this person to be the key communicator of your informal communication system? Does this person act primarily as your informal communication system's sole key communicator or is this position shared by several individuals in your organization? After thinking it over, would you change your answer?
6. Do you think that your informal communication system can be used as an effective means of influence in your organization? How influential would you say your informal communication system is in your organization? Could you give me an example of an instance of its influence. In what ways do

you attempt to influence your informal communication system?

7. Have any formal decisions ever resulted from information that was obtained from the informal communication system? If so, would you trace the development of such a decision from its inception to its implementation? Is there a formal structure, such as a contract which affects the manner in which your informal communication system functions? If so, what effect does it have on your informal communication system?
8. Do you think that using the key communicator of the informal communication system to circumvent the formal leaders (such as unit leaders) is an appropriate approach for achieving action? As an example, do you use the informal communication system to discuss some impending action, decision, etc. before formally reaching a decision? Have you ever used your key communicator to circumvent a formal leader. What was the result(s) of this approach?
9. Do you view yourself as a key communicator on your informal communication system? Why or why not? If so, can you cite an example when you have acted as a key communicator? Does your official position as a principal, either inhibit or encourage your participation on the grapevine? Why or why not? Can you cite examples where you have either been inhibited or encouraged to participate on your informal communication system?
10. Do you view the informal communication system as a legitimate means of transmitting organizational information such as policy statements, reports, etc.? Would you explain why you do or do not view the informal communication system as a legitimate means of communication?
11. Do you view the informal communication system as a valuable means of transmitting organizational information? Would you explain why you do or do not view the informal communication system as a valuable means of communication?

Appendix D

Interview Instrument

"Assessing Informal Communication in Organizations"

Key Communicators' Form


Appendix D

"Assessing Informal Communication in Organizations
--Key Communicators' Form"

1. Your principals has identified you as the key communicator of his informal communication system. Why do you think you were chosen?
2. Whom do you consider to be the key communicator of your school's informal communication system? (position) Why do you consider this person to be the key communicator of your informal communication system?
3. Do you view the principals as a key communicator of your school's informal communication system? Why or why not? If so, can you cite an example when he acted as a key communicator?
4. What type of information does your school's informal communication system usually disseminate to the staff? How frequently does your grapevine disseminate information? (How many times a week?) Would you give me an example of the type of information transmitted by your informal communication system? Could you cite an example of an incident that occurred recently that typifies this type of information?
5. What do you think is the primary function of your school's informal communication system? (For example, does it mainly spread rumors, act as a safety valve, carry news fast?) Why do you think your grapevine functions as it does?
6. How accurate do you think the information carried on your informal communication system is?
7. How influential would you say your informal communication system is in your school? Could you give me an example of an instance of its influence?
8. During which situations do you feel that your informal communication system is most active? Least active? Would you describe an incident when your informal communication system was most active? Why do you feel that this incident caused your informal communication system to become overly active?

9. How does your principal use the information he receives informally? For instance, do you know if he usually ignores it? Uses it to assess the feelings of the staff? Could you give me an example of a typical response or use that the principal makes of information received informally. Perhaps you can relate an incident when you relayed information to him?
10. Have any formal decisions ever resulted from information that was obtained from the informal communication system? If so, would you trace the development of such a decision from its inception to its implementation? Is there a formal structure, such as a contract which affects the manner in which your informal communication system functions? If so, what effect does it have on your informal communication system?
11. Does the principal ever use the informal communication system to discuss some impending action, decision, etc., before formally reaching a decision? Has he ever done so with you? Could you cite an instance when the principal has done so? If so, what was the result of this practice?
12. Do you think that your principal vies the informal communication system as a legitimate means of transmitting organizational information such as policy statements, reports, etc.? Would you explain why you think the principal does or does not view the informal communication system as a legitimate means of communication?
13. Do you think that your principal views the informal communication system as a valuable means of transmitting organizational information? Would you explain why you think the principals does or does not view the informal communication system as a valuable means of communication.

APPENDIX E



I am a graduate student at Loyola University of Chicago working on my doctoral dissertation. The purpose of my study is to determine if a relationship exists between a principal's leadership behavior and the manner in which his school's informal communication system functions. One phase of my research design requires me to secure from each elementary school principal in south Cook County information concerning his leadership behavior.

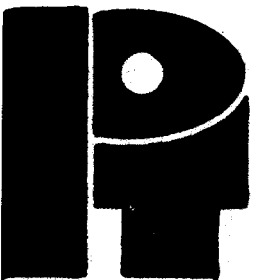
I am requesting that you, as superintendent of your school district, assist me by encouraging your principals to participate in my study. Principals may participate in this study by responding to the questionnaire that I will be sending them in the near future. Each questionnaire has a three digit code number which will insure confidentiality and will be used to match the questionnaires completed by the same respondent. It is not necessary for the principal to identify himself, his school, or his school district on the questionnaire. All information is strictly confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. Each questionnaire is to be returned to me in an enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope.

A number of respondents to the first questionnaire will be asked to respond to a subsequent questionnaire. A smaller sample of respondents will then be asked to grant me a follow-up interview in the near future.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Phyllis O. Tate



I am a graduate student at Loyola University of Chicago working on my doctoral dissertation. The purpose of my study is to determine if a relationship exists between a principal's leadership behavior and the manner in which his school's informal communication system functions. One phase of my research design requires me to secure from each elementary school principal in south Cook County information concerning his leadership behavior.

Please respond to the enclosed questionnaire. This instrument is Hersey's and Blanchard's LEAD-self questionnaire, which will help me gain some insight into your leadership behavior. If you will notice, there is a three digit number in the upper right hand corner of the questionnaire. This is your code number for this study. This number will insure confidentiality and will be used to match the questionnaires completed by the same respondent. It is not necessary for you to identify yourself, your school, or your school district on the questionnaire. All information is strictly confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. Please return the questionnaire to me in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope.

A number of respondents to this questionnaire will be asked to respond to a subsequent questionnaire. A smaller sample of respondents will then be asked to grant me a follow-up interview in the near future.


Your response by _____ would be appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Phyllis O. Tate

enclosures



I would like to thank you for responding to my request for assistance in the collection of data for my doctoral dissertation at Loyola University of Chicago. As I previously indicated, I am interested in determining if there is a relationship between a principal's leadership behavior and the manner in which his/her school's informal communication system functions.

As I indicated in the first request, a number of principals would be asked to respond to a second questionnaire. This instrument, "Informal Communications in Organizations", will help me gain some insight into your behavior towards your informal communication system. I would like to invite you to respond to the enclosed questionnaire.

Again, there is a three digit number in the upper right hand corner of the questionnaire. This is your code number for this study. This number will insure confidentiality and will be used to match the questionnaires completed by the same respondent. It is not necessary for you to identify yourself, your school, or your school district on the questionnaire. All information is strictly confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. Please return the questionnaire to me in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope.

A limited number of respondents to this questionnaire will be asked to grant me an interview in the near future.


Your response by _____ would be appreciated.

Again, I thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Phyllis O. Tate

enclosures



I would like to thank you for your continued response to my request for assistance in the collection of data for my doctoral dissertation at Loyola University of Chicago. As previously indicated, I am interested in determining if a relationship exists between a principal's leadership behavior and the manner in which his/her school's informal communication system functions.

As I indicated in my prior requests, a limited number of principals would be asked to grant me an interview. The purpose of the interview will be to confirm the data gathered through the questionnaire, "Informal Communication in Organizations." Also I would like to obtain more detailed information about the operation of your school's informal communication system.

Following our interview, I would like to interview the person you identified on the questionnaire "Informal Communication in Organizations" as the key communicator of your school's informal communication system. This person will be asked questions similar to the ones we will be discussing in our interview.

As before, all information gained through these interviews will be held in strict confidence and will be used for academic purposes only.

I will be in contact with your office on or before to schedule an interview time and date which is most convenient to you and your key communicator. Each interview will require approximately one-half hour to complete.

Due to the small number of principals selected for this phase of the study, your continued cooperation is appreciated, and most essential to the completion of this study.

Again, I thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Phyllis O. Tate

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Phyllis O. Tate has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Max A. Bailey, Director
Associate Professor, Administration and Supervision,
Loyola

Dr. Melvin P. Heller
Professor and Chairman, Administration and
Supervision, Loyola

Dr. Dennis C. Zuelke
Assistant Professor, Administration and Supervision,
Loyola

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

November 18, 1981
Date

MAO Bailey
Director's Signature